

SCENES

FROM

THE RAMAYAN

ETC

BY

RALPH T H GRIFFITH, M A

PRINCIPAL OF THE BEHARIS COLLEGE

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The history and the philosophy of antiquity are invaluable and could ill be spared but its poetry is what makes the ancient world near of kin to us, and is that by which we feel that the men of old were bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The poetry of a race is what redeems it from perishing as a race and immortalizes not only the individual poet but the men who first loved his song and were gladdened by it. This is what binds together the hearts of the ancient and modern worlds.

Saturday Review

TO MY DEAR FRIEND

S A Y

I inscribe this little book

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PREFACE

THERE are two recensions of the Ramayan, one belonging to Benares and the North West of India, the other to Bengal proper. Two books out of the seven of which the latter consists, were published with an English prose translation in 1806 and 1810 by Carey and Marshman, the venerable Missionaries of Serampore. Two books of the Benares recension, with an excellent Latin translation of the first book and part of the second, were published in 1829 by Augustus William von Schlegel. A magnificent edition of the Bengal recension, with an accurate and elegant translation into Italian,¹ has since been brought out, under royal auspices, by Signor Gorresio of Turin, and a French translation of this edition has been published by M. Hippolyte Fauche. There is an excellent article on the Ramayan in the Westminster Review,¹ Vol. L, and another full of interest

ing information on the same subject in the forty-fifth Number of the Calcutta Review. Professor Williams's "Indian Epic Poetry" gives a full analysis of the poem with several metrical specimens, and Mrs. Speir in "Life in 'Ancient India," and Mlle Clarisse Bader in "La Femme dans L'Inde Antique" have written lovingly and gracefully upon the great work of Valmiki. To these authorities (and to Mr. Talboys Wheeler's second volume of his history of India) the reader is referred for the results of European criticism upon the poem and for the opinions formed of it in the West by those who have become acquainted with the great poem of the Hindus either in the original or by means of translation. Here, instead of an introduction of my own, I offer what I think will be more interesting, some remarks by Baboo Pramadadas Mittra, an orthodox Hindu, formerly my pupil and now my esteemed colleague

"The Ramayan is the oldest and most glorious

poem of India, and its author, the saint Valmiki, who is consequently called *Adi kavī* or the Father of poetry, is held in the greatest veneration “I adore that *kokila*—Valmiki, who mounted on the branch of poesy, warbles in honeyed accents ‘Rama’ and ‘Rama’ and ‘Rama again —this is a literal rendering of the stanza of salutation, composed by an unknown author, which prefaces every manuscript of the poem and genuinely breathes the feelings with which the Hindu regards this holy bard The account given in the beginning of the poem of the incidents which led to its composition beautifully harmonizes with the main composition and touchingly shows how exquisitely tender and pure was that saintly heart which breathed forth a poem unrivalled perhaps in the world for its pathos and moral purity One day the saint accompanied by his disciple resorted to the holy stream Tamasa and finding the waters pure as the heart of the good asked his disciple to fetch his garment of bark He put it on, and descended into the

stream, performed his ablutions and muttered his prayers. Afterwards while roving amidst the woods situated on the banks of the sacred river, he saw a couple of herons wandering secure. On a sudden the male was shot dead by a fowler, and the female, tossing herself about in the air, screamed out most pitifully her lamentations. At this act of cruelty, the grief of the holy saint burst forth in the exclamation :

मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः श्रावतीः समाः ।

यत्क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोदितम् ॥

‘Never for endless years, O forester, shalt thou obtain rest, as thou hast killed one of the loving couple of herons ’¹

He was struck with the rhythm of the sentence he had almost unconsciously uttered, he brooded over it and the piteous event which called it forth. As he

¹ Or, to versify in the metre of the original, excepting the rhyme

‘No rest for ever circling years, mayst thou, O forester, obtain

By whose fell hand this harmless bird, while sporting with his mate,
was slain’

was seated in this mood of meditation and tenderness, Brahma himself, the creator of the world, appeared, as it is said, before him, exhorted him to sing the deeds of the glorious hero Rama in the metre in which his tenderness had expressed itself, and inspired him with the knowledge of his whole history, in all its particulars whether hidden or public, the divine saint Narada having already introduced him to it by a relation of the main events. This account which is now contained in the introductory portion of the poem itself was perhaps originally preserved separately by tradition.

Valmiki, who was contemporary with his hero, began to compose his poem when Rama had ascended his paternal throne, having returned from the woods, with his Sita restored.

To write a criticism on the poetry of the Ramayan nicely discerning and aptly delineating the vari-

ous beauties is a task requiring an ability far more than I can lay claim to I will therefore simply express the general feelings which its perusal excites in every Hindu of true sensibility. No where else, I believe, are poetry and morality so charmingly united each elevating the other as in the pages of this really holy poem. There are indeed many poetical compositions nay almost all good poetry is such as forcibly teach us some moral truths, but the Ramayan is the only poem which inspires our breasts with a love of goodness in the entire sense of the word. We rise from its perusal with a loftier idea of almost all the virtues that can adorn man of truth, of filial piety, of paternal love, of female chastity and devotion, of a husband's faithfulness and love, of fraternal affection, of meekness, of forgiveness, of fortitude, of universal benevolence What, for instance, can excite a greater reverence of Divine Truth than the perusal of that scene where Dasaratha parts with his beloved son for her sake and at last

sacrifices his life for her? What can more impressively teach us filial love than the conduct of Rama giving up his domestic felicity, his kingdom, to preserve his father's vow? Well may the Ramayan challenge the literature of every age and country to produce a poem that can boast of such perfect characters as a Rama and a Sita.

The loftiness of its moral tone, though a high one, is not the only recommendation of the poem. It is true, in several places, it is mere prosaic narration, yet there is an ample profusion in it of true poetry—glowing delineations of human passions, delicate paintings of natural beauties, and magnificent descriptions of battle scenes.

In the "Scenes" now offered to the public something like a connected story of the hero's adventures is given from his birth to the loss of Sita the remainder of the story including the Siege of Lanka

the Defeat of Ravan, and the happy recovery of Sita, may, perhaps, follow. The " Birth of Rama," I should observe, is not from the Ramayan, but from the Raghuvansa of the later poet Kalidasa

The chief characteristic of the Ramayan being simplicity, I have not attempted to give my lines a polish which would lessen their resemblance to the original, and I have endeavoured rather to be faithful to the spirit of my author and, if possible, to be readable, than to translate as closely as I might have done.

The Messenger Cloud is the work of Kalidasa, the poet of sweet Sakontala. If Professor H. H. Wilson's graceful version of this little poem had been easily accessible to the general reader I should not have attempted my paraphrase

Most of the pieces now published in a collective form have appeared in the *Pandit*, the Benares Col-

lege Journal of Sanskrit literature the "Hermit's
Son" is reprinted, with a few alterations, from
"Specimens of Old Indian Poetry

BENARES }
July 17th 1868 }

A few slight alterations have been made in this
edition, and the following pieces have been added,
SITA IN PRISON, RAMA IN THE SPRING, TIDINGS OF SITA,
RAVAN'S PALACE, THE OMENS, RAVAN DEAD, SITA DIS
GRACED, HOME, THE DESCENT OF GANGA, TARA'S LAMENT,
AND INGRATITUDE

BENARES COLLEGE }
January 1870 }

AYODHYA¹

Nous sommes dans Ayodhya, le séjour des princes de la dynastie
 glorieuse Dasaratha règne Nous sommes en plein âge d'or et en lisant les
 curieuses descriptions de la royauté on se fait une haute idée de la civilisa-
 tion de l'Inde dans un siècle antérieur à celui de Salomon. —Mlle C. RICH-
 BADEL *La Femme dans l'Inde Ant.*

ON pleasant Sarjus² fertile side
 There lies a rich domain
 With countless herds of cattle thronged
 And gay with golden grain
 There built by Manu³ Prince of men
 That saint by all revered

¹ The ruins of the ancient capital of Ram and the Children of the Sun may still be traced in the present Ajudhya, near Fyzabad. Ajudhya is the Jerusalem or Mecca of the Hindus.

² The Sarju or Ghagra, anciently called Sarayu rises in the Himalayas and after flowing through the province of Oudh falls into the Ganges.

³ This Manu was the first prince of the Solar dynasty
 First Manu reigned revered by every sage —*Raghuvarsa* I 16

Ayodhya, famed through every land,
Her stately towers upreared
Her vast extent, her structures high,
With every beauty deckt,
Like Indra's city,¹ showed the skill
Of godlike architect
Or like a bright creation sprung
From himner's magic art,
She seemed too beautiful for stone
So fair was every part.
Twelve leagues the queenly city lay
Down the broad river's side,
And, guarded well with moat and wall,
The foeman's power defied
Her ample streets were nobly planned,
And streams of water flowed
To keep the fragrant blossoms fresh,
That strewed her royal road
There many a princely palace stood
In line on level ground,

¹ Indra is the Hindu Jove. The name of his celestial city is Amaravati

Here temple and triumphal arc
And rumpart banner-crowned
There gilded turrets rose on high
Above the waving green
Of mango-groves and bloomy trees
And flowery knots between
On battlement and gilded spire
The pennon waved in state
And warders with the ready bow
Kept watch at every gate
She shone a very mine of gems
The throne of Fortune's Queen
So many hued her gay parterres
So bright her fountains sheen
Her pleasure grounds were filled at eve
With many a happy throng
And ever echoed with the sound
Of merry feast and song
For meat and drink of noblest sort
In plenty there were stored
And all enjoyed their share of wealth,
Nor heaped the miser's hoard

At morn the blossom-scented air
 The clouds of incense stirred,
 And blended with the wreath's perfume
 The sweet fresh smell of mud
 Streamed through her streets, in endless line,
 Slow wain and flying car
 Horse, elephant, and merchant train
 And envoys from afar
 Her ample arsenals were filled
 With sword, and club, and mace
 And wondrous engines, dealing death,¹
 Within her towers had place
 Nor there unknown the peaceful arts
 That youthful souls entrance,
 Of player, minstrel, mime, and bard,
 And girls that weave the dance
 There rose to heaven the Veda-chant,
 Here blent the lyre and lute
 There rang the stalwart archer's string,
 Here softly breathed the flute

¹ The *sataghni*, i. e. *centicide*, or slayer of a hundred, is generally supposed, says Wilson, to be a sort of fire arms, or the ancient Indian rocket, but it is also described as a stone set round with iron spikes

The swiftest horses whirled her cars
 Of noblest form and breed
 Vanayu's¹ mare that mocked the wind
 And Vahli's² fiery steed
 There elephants that once had roamed
 On Vindhya's mountains vied
 With monsters from the bosky dells
 That shag Himalaya's side
 The best of Brahmans gathered there
 The flame of worship fed
 And versed in all the Vedas lore
 Their lives of virtue led
 By penance charity and truth
 They kept each sense controlled
 And giving freely of their store
 Rivalled the saints of old
 Her dames were peerless for the charm
 Of figure voice and face
 For lovely modesty and truth
 And woman's gentle grace

¹ The location of Vanayu is not exactly determined. It seems to have lain to the North West of India.

Vahli or Vahluka is the modern Balkh

Their husbands, loyal, wise, and kind,
 Were heroes in the field,
And sternly battling with the foe,
 Could die, but never yield
The poorest man was richly blest
 With knowledge, wit, and health,
Each lived contented with his own,
 Nor envied other's wealth
All scorned to lie no miser there
 His buried silver stored
The braggart and the boast were shunned,
 The slanderous tongue abhorred
Each kept his high observances,
 And loved one faithful spouse
And troops of happy children crowned,
 With fruit, their holy vows

RAVAN DOOMED

Lanka, or Ceylon had fallen under the dominion of a prince named Ravan who was a demon of such power that by dint of penance he had extorted from the God Brahma a promise that no immortal should destroy him. Such a promise was as relentless as the Greek Fate from which Jove himself could not escape and Ravan now deeming himself invulnerable gave up as a citizen and tyrannized over the whole of southern India. At length even the Gods in heaven were distressed at the destruction of holiness and oppression of virtue consequent upon Ravan's tyrannies and they called a council on the mansion of Brahma to consider how the earth could be relieved from such a fiend. —MRS SPEER *Life in 4 cent India*

Thus to the Lord by whom the worlds were made
 The Gods of Heaven in full assembly prayed
 O Brahma mighty by thy tendered grace
 Fierce Ravan leader of the giant race
 Torments the Gods too feeble to withstand
 The ceaseless fury of his heavy hand

From thee well pleased, he gained in days of old
That saving gift by which he waves bold ,
And we, obedient to that high behest,
Bear all his outrage, patient and opprest
He scourges—impious fiend earth, hell, and sky ,
And Indra, lord of Gods, would fain defy
Mad with thy boon, he vexes in his rage
Fiend, angel, seraph, Brahman, saint, and sage
From him the Sun restrains his wonted glow,
Nor dares the Wind upon his face to blow ,
And Ocean, necklaced with the wandering wave,
Stills the wild waters till they cease to rave
O Father, lend us thine avenging aid,
And slay this fiend, for we are sore afraid '

They ceased Then pondering in his secret mind,
' One way,' He said, ' to stay this scourge, I find
Once, at his prayer, I swore his life to guard
From God and angel, fiend, and heavenly bard
But the proud giant, in o'erweening scorn,
Recked not of mortal foe, of woman born

Man only man this hideous pest may slay
None else can take his charmed life away

When Brahma's speech the Gods and sages heard
Their fainting souls with hope reviving stirred
Then crowned with glory like a mighty flame
Lord Vishnu timely to the council came
Shell mace and discus in his hands he bore
And royal raiment tinged with gold he wore
Hailed by the Gods most glorious to behold
With shining armlets forged of burnisht gold
He rode his eagle through the reverent crowd
Like the Sun borne upon a darksome cloud
Lost in deep thought he stood by Brahma's side
While all the Immortals praised his name and cried

O Vishnu Lord divine thine aid we crave
Friend of the worlds the ruined worlds to save
Divide thy godhead Lord and for the sake
Of Gods and men man's nature on thee take !

Cp P radis Lo t Book III 281

The r nature als to thy natu e join
And be thy elf man among m n on earth

'The fell fiend Ravan, ravener' abhorred,
 Slay him, and all his race, avenging Lord '
 Then turn triumphant to thine home on high
 And reign for ever in the ransomed sky.'

¹ *Virāṭanam rāṭanam* Literally Ravan who causes weeping

For a similar play upon the word *ep* Paradise Regained

"And saw the *rarens* with their horned beaks

Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,

Though *ravenous*, taught to abstain from what they brought

THE BIRTH OF RAMA

The scene changes to earth where Dasaratha King of Ayodhya after a life spent in deeds of virtue finds his years drawing to a close without any heir to defend his old age or succeed to his crown. A holy rish or saint reveals to him that he shall obtain his desires on performing the *Aswamedha*, or sacrifice of a horse which occupies such a preminent place in the Hindu religious rites. The sacrifice is accordingly performed and with the promised result. Dasaratha's three wives become the mothers of four sons all participating in the divine nature of Vishnu but Rama, the eldest, is Vishnu himself — *Westernster Review* October 1848 p. 41

With costly sacrifice with praise and prayer
 Ayodhya's King had claimed from Heaven an heir
 When from the shrine where burnt the holy flame
 Scaring the priests a glorious angel came
 With arms that trembled as they scarce could hold
 A flood of nectar in a vase of gold

A weight too vast for even him to bear,
 For Vishnu's self, the first of Gods, was there
 With reverent awe the Lord of Kosal's land'
 Received the nectar from the angel's hand,
 As erst Lord Indra from the milky wave
 Took the sweet drink that troubled Ocean gave²

Soon as the queens had shared that mystic bowl,
 Hope, sure and stedfast, filled each lady's soul
 They saw, in dreams, a glorious host who kept
 Their watch around them, as they sweetly slept
 They mounted skyward on the Feathered King,³
 Who spread a glory with each golden wing,
 And as he shot through plains of ether drew
 The cloudy rack to follow where he flew
 Now Lakshmi,⁴ with her consort's mystic gem

¹ Kosala was the name of the kingdom of which Ajodhya was capital

² The *Amrit*, or nectar of the Indian Gods, buried at the Deluge recovered at the *Churning of the Ocean*. The story is told in the *Mahābhārata* and translated in *Specimens of old Indian Poetry*

³ The sacred bird of Vishnu, Garuda by name

⁴ Lakshmi, Goddess of Beauty and Fortune, was the wife of Vishnu
 mystic gem is called Kaustubha

"the best

Of gems, that burns with living light
 Upon Lord Vishnu's breast."

Sparkling upon her breast for love of them
 Came from the skies and her own radiant hand
 Their slumbering eyelids with a lotus fanned
 Then from their homes on high—their holy huan
 Damp from the lucid stream that wanders there—
 Came in a glorious dream the star throned Seven¹
 Whispering softly of the Lord of Heaven

Proud waxed the Monarch as each happy queen
 Told the bright visions that her eyes had seen
 No king he deemed with him in bliss could vie
 No nor the Father of the earth and sky
 As many a river lends its silver breast
 Where the calm image of the moon may rest
 So in the bosom of each lady lay
 That God divided who is one for aye
 Soon like the luminous herb which ere tis night
 Wins from the setting sun a ray of light

¹ The seven great saints who are the stars of the constellation (Ursa Major) The seven great saints who star the northern sky *Birth of the War God*

² The setting sun says the Indian poets deposits a portion of his light with certain plants which emit luminous rays in his absence

Like gems in darkness, issuing rays

They've treasured from the sun the treasure —*Lalla Rookh*

Kausalya¹ gained a child, a lovely star,
To chase the shadow of the night afar
A babe so bright, that every torch grew dim
In the Queen's chamber, when it shone near him.
They named him Rama,² for the child shall bring
Eternal joy to all who hail him King
Then the young mother, languid, pale, and worn,
Looked, as she nursed her babe, her newly born,
Like Ganga by the autumn heat opprest,
With one sweet lotus on her island-breast.
And Queen Kaikeyi bare a noble child,
Named Bharat, beautiful, and meek, and mild .
By fond affection and obedience, sent
To be his mother's pride and ornament
Like gentle modesty that lends new grace
To each dear winning charm of Beauty's face
Then Queen Sumitra, fairest of the fair,
Twin children, Lakshman and Satrugghna, bare
Thus self-control and knowledge spring to light,
When fruitful learning is employed aright

¹ Kausalya was chief of the three queens of Dasaratha

² Rama is derived from the root *Ram* to sport, take pleasure.

The babes were born then sin and sorrow fled
And joy and virtue reigned supreme instead
For Vishnu's self disdained not mortal birth
And Heaven came with him as he came to earth
Once more the regions where each guardian lord
Had quailed before the giant he abhorred
Were cheered with breezes pure from dust and stain
And freed from terror hailed a gentler reign
The fire was dimmed by cloudy smoke no more
And the sun shone untroubled as before
But Ravana's Glory poured her sorrows down
In jewels dropping from the giant's crown
While drums of triumph beaten in the sky
Woke the King's music to a glad reply
And the first rite to bless the joyful hour
Was the rich down-pour of a fragrant shower
Of blossoms falling from the heavenly trees
On the proud monarch's gilded galleries

Graced with the holy rites and nursed with care
As the babes strengthened fairer and more fair,

So with their growth increased their father's joy
 An elder brother to each darling boy
 Modest by nature, gentle nurture's aid
 More modest still the youthful princes made
 Thus, when the sacred oil its influence lends,
 In brighter spires the hallowed flame ascends
 With virtues blent in sweet accord to grace
 The ancient line of Raghu's' sinless race
 As all the seasons of the year combine
 To deck the garden where the Gods recline.
 They loved as brothers in their royal home,
 But still in pairs they ever chose to roam
 Rama and Lakshman closer ties allied,
 And Bharat wandered by Satrugna's side,
 Linkt in eternal love, like wind and fire,
 Or the dear Moon and Sea his foster-sire²
 As when, at summer's close, dark clouds arise,
 Bringing sweet comfort to men's longing eyes,

¹ Raghu, the great grandfather of Rama was one of the most celebrated of the Solar dynasty and has given his name to the family

² At the *Churning of the Ocean* the moon with other buried treasures was recovered from the Ocean, by whom, therefore, it is still regarded with parental affection

So the fair children won the people's hearts
By gentle graces and attractive arts
Men deemed that Duty Profit Love and Bliss
Had come incarnate from their world to this
And with more pride the father's bosom glowed
For the rare virtues and the love they showed
Than for the pearls in countless tribute poured
By the four oceans to delight their lord

THE HEIR APPARENT.

And when at eve his warlike task was o'er
He sat and listened to their peaceful lore.
Just pure and prudent full of tender ruth
The foe of falsehood and the friend of truth
Kind slow to anger prompt at misery's call
He loved the people and was loved of all
Proud of the duties of his Warrior race
His soul was worthy of his princely place
Resolved to win, by many a glorious deed
Throned with the Gods in Heaven a priceless meed
What though Brihaspati¹ might hardly vie
With him in eloquence and quick reply
None heard the music of his sweet lips flow
In idle wrangling or for empty show
He shunned no toils that student's life befit
But learned the Vedas and all Holy Writ
And even eclipsed his father's archer fame
So swift his arrow and so sure his aim

Then rose a longing in the Monarch's breast
'O that the Gods would take me to their rest !

¹ The Preceptor of the Gods

Might I but see, ere yet my course be run,
 'The hallowed waters poured upon my son
 See in mine age, a worthy heir, mine own
 Beloved Rama on Ayodhya's throne ' '
 Then with his friends he counselled that his heir
 Should ease his burthen and divide the care
 For, old and worn, he felt that death was nigh,
 And dark signs threatened both in earth and sky
 But still he quailed not, for he knew how dear
 All held Prince Rama, and this banisht fear

Forthwith he summoned, for the solemn day,
 People and princes near and far away
 They came . and splendid in his king's attire
 He looked upon them, as the Eternal Sire,
 In all the glory of a God arrayed,
 Gazes upon the creatures he has made

Like heavenly music, very sweet and loud,
 Thus spake the Monarch to the gathered crowd
 ' Needs not for me, ye noble lords, to show,
 How like fond fathers, as full well ye know,

The ancient monarchs of our famous line
 Have ruled this mighty realm which now is mine
 Their glorious steps forbade my feet to stray
 And I have laboured with a loving sway
 Neath the white canopy's imperial shade¹
 Till strength is vanisht and my health decayed
 To bless my people if they have been blest.
 And now my weary spirit longs for rest
 For many thousand years have o'er me flown²
 And many generations round me grown
 And past away No longer can I bear
 The ruler's labour and the judge's care
 The royal power and dignity a weight
 Too vast but for the young and temperate
 I long to rest mine anxious labour done
 And on the throne to set my darling son.
 For all the virtues lent to me adorn
 Rama my dearest and my eldest born.

¹ The white umbrella was one of the insignia of royalty

The ancient kings of India enjoyed lives of more than patriarchal length

While thus Indra reigns above the sky

He ruled the earth ten thousand years flew by

Raghavansa X. 1

Ye have the plan which I have pondered long
Approve it now, or, if ye deem it wrong,
Show, after due debate, a wiser way,
Which I will strive to follow if I may'

He ceased A murmur of so loud acclaim
From lords and commons in glad answer came,
As when wild peacocks at the rain rejoice,
And hail the big cloud with their jubilant voice
The general shout from all the people round
Shook the high palace with a storm of sound
And when the crowd, assembled there, had learned
The will of him who right and gain discerned,
After a brief debate, with one accord,
They spake in answer to their sovereign lord

' Rest, aged King, and let Prince Rama share
The toil too sore for thee, as Regent Heir
Our own dear Prince so gallant and so strong,
All tongues will bless him as he rides along,
All hearts rejoice above his brow to see
The canopy that long has shaded thee

Amid the noblest of the world not one
Can match the virtues of thy godlike son
In him alone all peerless graces blend
The fearless foeman and the faithful friend
Versed in the statutes kind to all in need
Quick to encourage every noble deed
True to his promise resolute of soul
Curbing each passion with a firm control
Kind to the Brahmans skilled in Scripture's page
The friend of learning and the prop of age
Matchless on earth with spear and sword and shield
Lord of the arms which heavenly warriors wield
Thine order bids him tame some foeman's pride ,
He comes a victor Lakshman at his side
Then from his elephant or car he bends
To greet the townsmen as beloved friends
Asks how each man and child and servant thrives
How fare our young disciples babes and wives
And like a loving father bids us tell
That Heaven accepts our rites and all is well
Long has each matron long each tender maid
At morn and eve for Rama's welfare prayed

And Rama's glories every hour are sung
In town and village by the old and young
Then grant the prayer, by us this day renewed,
And consecrate our Prince, Lord Rama, lotus-hued

MANTHARA'S GUILE

"But this happiness was all destroyed by the intrigues of Dasaratha's second wife who was jealous of Rama and determined that her son Bharat should be the future king. Mrs. SREENI.

High on the palace roof Kaikeyi's maid
 The crook back Manthara, the town surveyed
 She saw the water sprinkled o'er the street
 And flowery heaps and garlands fresh and sweet
 Saw pennons playing in the scented air
 And busy Brahmans bustling here and there
 From every corner as around she gazed
 She heard a concert of glad music raised
 While every temple shone with purest white
 That the maid marvelled at the festive sight

She turned to Rama's nurse, who standing by,
Gazed on the scene with rapture-rolling eye,
And cried 'I pray thee, aged matron, say,
Does Rama's mother scatter gifts to-day ?
Have the Gods listened to Kausalya's vow,
And made the frugal Queen so lavish now ?'

The white-robed nurse, with transport uncontrolled,
All the glad story to the damsel told
'To-morrow's happy light will see,' she cried,
'Prince Rama Regent by his father's side'

Down from the roof, high as Kailasa's¹ head,
In furious haste the crook-back maiden sped
Planning accursed guile, her soul aflame,
Where Queen Kaikeyi lay asleep, she came
'Up, Queen' she cried, 'unclose thy heedless eyes,
Huge peril threatens thee, awake ! arise !
Art thou still sleeping, still too blind to see
The load of misery that crushes thee ?

¹ 'One of the loftiest peaks of the Himalayas.

Boast of thy husband's love and find too late
 His vaunted favour but disguises hate
 Ruin to thee and thine thy lord has planned
 To make Prince Rama Regent o'er the land
 In fear and grief and rage thy faithful slave
 Has hither fled to warn thee and to save
 Are not my fortunes closely knit with thine?
 Thy gain and peril, both are also mine
 And thou the scion of a princely race
 Shouldst know the frauds which royal hearts disgrace
 Poor Queen he loves thee not thy treacherous lord
 Can smile upon thee while he bares the sword
 And thy sweet soul pure from all thought of sin
 Sees not the cruel snares that hem thee in
 Kind flattering words he makes thine empty dower
 But Queen Kausalya has the wealth and power
 Far from thy side thine own dear son he sends
 To live an exile with his mother's friends
 And every rival thus removed from sight
 He gives to Rama all the royal might
 Alas ! deluded lady thou hast prest
 A deadly serpent to thy foolish breast,

Lavishing love on him who works thee woe,
No loving husband but a mortal foe.
Come, rouse thee, mistress, while there yet is time,
Ensure thy safety and prevent the crime
Up from thy careless ease ! awake, and be
The saviour of thy son, thyself, and me.'

Up rose Kaikeyi radiant with delight,
Like the calm moon upon the autumn night,
And spoke these words in answer, as she gave,
For the glad news, a necklace to the slave .
'Take this, dear maiden, for thy pains, and say
How can my love thy welcome tale repay.
I joy that Rama shares his father's throne :
I love Kausalya's son e'en as I love mine own'

The handmaid's soul with grief and fury burned ,
She cried in anger, as the gift she spurned
'What' on the sea of whelming ruin tost,
Canst thou rejoice when all but hope is lost ?
Heart-sick I am, yet smile to see thy joy
When peril threatens and will soon destroy.

If thou wert wise thou scarce wouldst hail I ween
 For king the offspring of a rival queen
 Soon wilt thou stand in menial habit drest
 And move obedient to her high behest
 Yea thou wilt serve with us who serve thee now
 And see thy child before his brother bow
 Then Rama's wife will triumph queen of all
 And thy poor daughter be a helpless thrall

The virtuous Rama thus the dame replied
 From virtue's path will never turn aside
 Obedient grateful pure from stain and true
 As eldest born he only gains his due
 His lords and brethren many a year will share
 Blest in his rule his kind paternal care
 And when a hundred years have past away
 My son dear Bharat will enjoy the sway
 I love Prince Rama as mine own dear son
 I see no fault to stain him no not one
 Gentle and lowly good and kind is he
 Meek to his mother meeker still to me

What though he rule, there is no cause of fear,
To him his brethren as his soul are dear
And though in name his father's place he fill,
Bharat will share the royal sceptre still'

Kaikeyi ceased The impatient maiden sighed,
And thus with tears of grief and spite replied .
' Ah Queen, what frenzy has assailed thy mind,
And made thee thus to instant danger blind ?
Too blind to mark the seas of grief and woe
That o'er thy head with whelming fury flow.
For after Rama Rama's son will reign,
Nor hope of kingship for thy child remain
One heir is monarch when a monarch dies,
Else wild confusion in the state would rise
And be he good or bad, the power will fall
To him, the eldest born and lord of all.
Know, tender mother, that thy boy must flee,
A wretched outcast, from his home and thee.
For Rama's hand thy darling son will drive
An exile hence, if haply left alive

Come take the counsel that is wise and good
And banish Rama to the distant wood
Then we who serve thee well a faithful train
Will hail with joy Prince Bharat's happier reign.
How shall he, worthy of a nobler fate
From birth the object of his brother's hate
Poor and despised his wealthy tyrant's scorn
Obey the mandates of the elder born?
Arise sweet Queen to save thy child arise!
Prostrate beneath his brother's feet he lies
Like some young elephant who proud to lead
His trooping consorts through the woods to feed
Meets with a hungry lion in the way
And sinks in death his ruthless victor's prey

Then flasht the fury from Kaikeyi's eyes
As thus she spake with long and burning sighs
This day my son upon the throne shall see
And Rama banisht to the wood shall flee
But aid me damsel and some plan declare
To drive him hence and make my child the heir
Hast thou forgotten? thus the maid replied

'Or dost thou love thy secret thoughts to hide?
 Or dost thou wish, gay Queen, to hear me tell
 An ancient story which thou knowest well?
 Then I will speak Lady, be thine to hear,
 And mark my counsel with attentive ear
 In days of yore the Gods thy husband chose
 To aid their arms against their demon foes
 Thou, of thy love, didst follow where he led,
 And thou wast near him when he fought and bled
 Thy care preserved him, when in desperate strife
 He sank exhausted, and restored his life
 Grateful for this, thy loving husband sware
 To grant two boons, thy first and second prayer.
 Then come, remind him of his ancient oath,
 Recall the promised gifts and claim them both
 For thine own son, thy well-loved Bharat, claim
 The right of heirship and the Regent's name,
 And pray that Rama in the woods may roam
 Twice seven long years an exile from his home
 Once more attend the gloomy chamber¹ seek,

¹ Literally, *the chamber of wrath*, a 'growlery,' a small, dark, room, to which, it seems, the wives and ladies of the King used to betake themselves when offended

Rage in thine eye and tears upon thy cheek ,
 With robes disordered and dishevelled hair
 Fall on the cold ground and lie prostrate there
 When the King comes still sad and speechless lie
 Give him no answer lift not up thine eye
 Well do I know that thou hast ever been
 And more than ever art, his favourite queen
 For thy dear sake he d dare O well loved dame
 To cast his body to the burning flame
 Such death were welcome but he ne er will brook
 To anger thee or bear thine angry look
 Fain will he offer gems and pearls and gold
 Heed not his gifts be silent stern and cold
 Then to his mind those promised boons recall
 And claim them boldly he will grant thee all
 When he has raised his darling from the floor
 And sworn again to grant as first he swore
 Then for thy son demand the royal sway
 And drive Prince Rama to the woods away
 Hope and be bold the King is well inclined
 And this the hour to move his easy mind

Then Queen Kaikeyi, full of joy and pride,
Thus to her maid in gladsome tone replied
' Good is the plan thy ready wits devise,
Sagest of damsels, true and deep and wise '
Without thy constant care, thy faithful aid,
Unknown to me the King his plot had laid
The crook-back race are hideous to the sight,
Deformed, malicious, born for guile and spite .
Far other thou, with features formed to please,
A lovely lotus bending to the breeze
Thy hump, dear damsel, too, becomes thee well,
For there the arts of noble warriors dwell ,
And when Kausalya's son makes way for mine,
Around that hump a chain of gold shall shine
Yes, I will deck thee on that happy day
When Rama banisht takes my fear away .
With finest gold these hands thy hump shall deck,
And fling rich pearls around thy graceful neck
A precious frontlet, wrought with utmost care,
Bound on thy brow, shall make thy face more fair ;
And thou shalt move along in bright attire,
Each woman's envy and each man's desire

Fair as a lovely Goddess shalt thou be
And challenge the sweet moon to rival thee

Her lady's praise with joy the damsel heard
And thus again with wiles her spirit stirred
As the Queen lay upon her sumptuous bed
Like sacred fire upon the altar fed

Mistress, arise the glorious plot complete
Let the King find thee in thy dark retreat.
No prudent builder will the bridge delay
Till the wild waters shall have rolled away '
She ceased. The lady of the glorious eyes
Rose from her couch as Manthara bade her rise
And sought the mourner's cell in beauty's pride
Sure of his love who gave and ne'er denied
There on the ground obedient to the girl
She threw her necklace and each peerless pearl
And all the lustre to her beauty lent
By sparkling chain and golden ornament
Like a fair nymph upon the ground she fell
And Soon she cried thy task will be to tell
That Bharat rules as heir in Rama's stead
Or that the Monarch's darling queen is dead

DASARATHA'S OATH.



"Unfortunately Dasaratha had once given a promise to Bharat's mother that he would grant any two boons she pleased to ask. The promise had been made in years gone by, when he had been dangerously wounded in battle, and carefully attended by this wife, Kaikeyi, and amongst Hindus a promise was irrevocable, and therefore the wretched King felt compelled to yield, although the first boon required was to banish Rama for a period of fourteen years, and the second to declare Bharat the heir apparent" *Life in Ancient India*

Slow and majestic, as the Lord of Night,¹
When his full glory fears the Dragon's² might,
Glides through the calm fields of the autumn sky,
Where clouds with fleecy skirts are floating by,

¹ The moon, with the Hindus, is masculine

² Rahu, the ascending node, is in mythology a demon with the tail of a dragon whose head was severed from his body by Visnu, but being immortal the head and tail retained their separate existence, and being transferred to the stellar sphere became the authors of eclipses, the first especially by endeavouring to swallow the sun and moon

So to Kaikeyi's palace rich and va t
 King Dasaratha in his glory past
 There stalked flamingoes mixt with swans and cranes
 And gorgeous peacocks spread their jewelled trains,
 There screamed the parrot in his home of wire
 There breathed the music of the flute and lyre
 There many a damsel waited in the shade
 Here sat a dwarf and there a crook back maid
 Lay in the shadow of the woven bower
 Where glowed the Champac¹ and Asoca² flower
 There many a porch above the waving wood
 On ivory columns wrought with silver stood
 There trees that aye with fruit and blossom glowed
 O'er limpid waters hung their tempting load
 Here seats of silver and of gold were placed
 Here cates and viands lured the dainty taste
 Not e'en the Gods who dwell at ease I ween
 Could boast a brighter home than that fair queen

¹ A tree that bears yellow flowers of delicious fragrance

The maid of India, blit again to hold

In her full lap the Champac-leaves of gold. — *Lalla Rookh*

² The *Jonesia Asoca* one of the loveliest trees of India and perhaps of the whole world

With longing eyes the Monarch looked around,
But no Kaikeyi in her bower he found,
Yet 'twas the time at which the royal dame
Was ever there to greet him as he came
Then, moved by love and vext with anxious thought,
News of his darling from her maids he sought.
'My lord,' a trembling damsel thus replied,
'The Queen in anger to the cell has hied'
Then sick at heart, his senses all astray,
The Monarch hastened where the lady lay
Upon the cold bare ground, in mean attire,
While grief consumed her as a burning fire.
Prostrate and speechless, lovely and forlorn,
Like a sweet creeper by the roots upturn,
Or a frail nymph of Heaven, or Goddess, hurled
From glorious Swarga¹ to this nether world

As bends an elephant to heal the smart
Of his mate wounded by a venomed dart,
Soothes her with tender touch, and tries in vain
To check the flowing blood and stay her pain ;

¹ Indra's Paradise.

So the sad husband tried each kind caress
To still the fury of the Queen's distress
I know not darling thus he spake with sighs
To the fair lady of the lotus eyes
The sudden cause of all this wrath and woe
Why thou art angry why thine eyes overflow
Who has offended thee or dared to slight
My love my lady and my sole delight?
Tell me my dearest, art thou faint or ill?
I have physicians of unrivalled skill
One for each varied malady and pain
Come speak Kaikeyi and be well again
Wouldst thou for foe or friend have dole or meed?
The guiltless punished or the guilty freed?
The low exalted or the proud disgraced?
The poor made wealthy or the rich abased?
Tell but thy secret wish dear love I pray
My lords and I thy slightest word obey
By all the merit that my life has won
I swear my darling, speak and it is done
The whole broad earth whereon the sunbeams shine
And all her fleeces and corn and gold are mine

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I swear my darling speak and it is done

The whole broad earth whereon the sunbeams shine

And all her flocks and corn and gold are mine

Choose what thou wilt no bounds shall bar thy choice,
But let me hear again thine own dear voice,
And all thy grief and pain shall pass away
Like hoar frost shrinking from the God of Day'

The Queen replied 'No insult has distress,
No fault of others has enraged my breast
Come, with a mighty oath thine honour bind
To grant the boon for which my soul has pined'
She ceased The King, by his great love betrayed,
Leapt, like a roedeer, to the snare she laid
With a fond smile beneath his darling's head
He placed his hand, and raised her up, and said -
'Hast thou not learnt, my foolish love, till now,
That on this earth there is none dear as thou
To me, save only Rama? By his life
I swear to grant thee what thou wilt, dear wife.
I swear by him most worthy long to live,
Blest with all blessings that the Gods can give,
My peerless boy, pride of mine aged eye,
Whom but one hour to see not, is to die.'

Now hear she cried ye thirty Gods and three
Witness the oath that he has sworn to me !
Hear it ye Sun and Moon , thou Ether hear
O Night and Day O World and Space give ear !
Listen thou Heaven above attend O Earth
With visitants of more than mortal birth !
Angel and demon and night wandering shade
And Household Deities our present aid
Each Power and high Intelligence with all
That think and know to hear his oath I call
And now I pray thee O my lord and king
A time long past to thy remembrance bring
When Gods and demons met in furious fray
And I preserved thee on that awful day
Call to thy mind the guerdon promised then
And grant my double prayer O King of men
If thou refuse to do as thou hast sworn
Despised by thee I will not live till morn
This solemn pomp in Rama's name begun—
Grace Bharat with it consecrate my son
And forth to Dandak's distant forest drive
Thy Rama, banisht for nine years and five

There let him lead a hermit's life, and wear
The deerskin mantle and the matted hair'

Like a poor doe who sees the tigress near,
Lost and amazed and stupified with fear,
He spoke no word, but sinking on the ground
Sighed like a serpent by the charmer bound
At length, when slowly voice and sense returned,
He bent upon the Queen fierce eyes that burned
With flashes of intolerable ire,
Eager to scorch her with their furious fire :
'What wrong,' he cried, 'have I or Rama done,
Scourge of my house, thou fell and wicked one ?
Hast thou the heart to ruin my sweet boy,
And him who loves thee as a son, destroy ?
Ah ! woe is me that e'er I made thee mine,
And brought thee home, the ruin of my line,
In name the daughter of a king, in truth
A' deadly serpent with a venom'd tooth.
Tell me, what fault can I pretend to find
In virtuous Rama, praised by all mankind ?

How can I then my darling son forsake?
No take my life my royal honours take
Be either queen from my embraces torn
But not my Rama, not mine eldest born
Gazing on him mine aged eyes are glad
And when I see him not my soul is sad
The world may live without the sun the grain
Spring from the earth without the genial rain
But I without my son should be no more
Take Rama from me and my life is o'er
Banish the thought! thine impious plan forego
How couldst thou scheme a plot so full of woe?
Canst thou no mercy find no sorrow feel?
See with thy feet upon my head I kneel
Thou dost not mean it 'tis a cruel jest
To try the love that warms a father's breast
Hast thou not oft when in thy lap he smiled
Sworn he was dear to thee as thine own child?
Has he not since to youth and manhood grown
Most sonlike love and sweet obedience shown?
Never from man or woman have I heard
Against my Rama one accusing word

His gentle manners, ever soft and kind,
All hearts to him in firm affection bind
Truthful and just, that noble prince of men
Is loved and honoured by each citizen
A docile pupil, prompt to succour woe,
Feared by the foeman for his matchless bow
Faithful and pious, reverent, sincere,
Holy and wise, to all most justly dear
Canst thou for him thy wicked plot devise,
Good as the Gods and as the sages wise?
No angry word, no harsh reproof e'er slips
From the fair portal of his gentle lips
And at thy bidding how can I consent
To curse him with the doom of banishment?
O wife, have mercy ' hear my bitter cry,
A poor old weeping man whose death is nigh
This sea-girt land has treasures rich and rare
Take all, Kaikeyi, but my Rama spare
Once more, O Queen, my suppliant hands entreat,
Once more my lips are on thy lovely feet
O save my Rama, save my dearest child,
Nor let me die a wretch dishonoured and defiled.' •

No thrill of pity through her bosom ran
 As thus again the cruel Queen began
 If thou hast promised and art now forsworn
 How wilt thou keep thine ancient name from scorn?
 When gathered kings thy truth and honour praise
 How wilt thou bear thine abject eyes to raise
 And answer thus Ah ! Kings ye little know
 My queen to whose fond care my life I owe
 Saved by whose sweet love I am living now—
 To her I promised and I broke my vow
 Then will they scorn the king once counted just
 And tread his vaunted honour in the dust
 His flesh and blood the truthful Saivya¹ gave
 And fed the hawk a suppliant dove to save
 True to his word Alarka gave his eyes
 And gained rich guerdon in the blissful skies
 The furious sea himself his promise keeps
 And ne'er beyond his stated limit sweeps

¹ A just and truthful king who being unwilling to deprive a hawk of his prey rather than to betray the dove to which he had promised protection gave his own flesh to the hawk who would accept nothing else instead. The story is told in the *Mahabharata* in different ways of more than one king.

² What more changeable than the Sea!
 But over his great tides
 Fidelity presides — WORDSWORTH

Remember all I did for thy dear sake,
And tremble now thy promised word to break
Thou hopest Rama to the throne to raise,
And with Kausalya live voluptuous days
But be it truth or falsehood, right or wrong,
I claim thy promise unredeemed so long
Make Rama Regent, and before thine eyes
This day Kaikeyi drinks the bowl, and dies
Far better die, than live one day, to see
Obsequious subjects, with no glance on me,
Before my rival Rama's mother stand,
And hail her Lady with the suppliant hand
Now by my son and by myself I swear,
No tears shall soften me, no gift or prayer .
This, only this shall now my soul content
I claim thine oath and Rama's banishment'

THE STEP MOTHER

The night long and dreary as a hundred years which the unhappy King has spent in lamentation and entreaties to the inexorable Kaikeyi is past, and the morn'g appointed for the consecration of Rama is come. Rama having been summoned enters the chamber where the King and Kaikeyi are

Weighed down by woe with wild despairing mien
 There sate the Monarch with the cruel Queen
 Then Rama bowed his royal sire to greet
 And did obeisance at Kaikeyi's feet
 The King with downcast eyes still brimming o'er
 Just murmured Rama ' and could say no more
 Then sudden fear made even Rama shake
 As though his heedless foot had toucht a snake
 How could he loôk upon that awful change
 And bear, unmoved ' sight so sad and strange '

A mighty monarch but an hour ago,
Now a poor mourner, weak and wan with woe -
Weeping and groaning, mad with wildering thought,
Like the deep wave-crowned sea to frenzy wrought :
Like the bright Sun-God labouring in eclipse,
Or like a holy sage whose heedless lips
Have spoken falsely Rama's tender breast
Knew for awhile the moon-diawn sea's unrest ,
And pierced with sorrow for his father's sake,
To Queen Kaikeyi, reverent, he spake

 'Tell me my fault, or plead for me and win
His pardon, angered by my careless sin
Why is my father, whom I ever find
Most full of love, so silent and unkind ?
To what sharp anguish or what care a prey
Weeps he and sighs and turns his face away ?
Say, has some grievous woe, some deadly ill
Stricken his sons, or consorts dearer still ?
Better to die than grieve a loving sire
Death has no terror like a father's ire

Surely the source to which he owes his birth
Must to a son be as a God on earth
Then speak O lady speak that I may know
What sudden grief has changed my father o

Thus Rama questioned and the greedy dame
Gave her bold answer lost to ruth and shame
No fault of thine thy father's soul offends
No deadly stroke upon his house descends
One wish he fosters to his heart most dear
And he would tell thee but he shrinks in fear
Thou art so fondly loved no voice has he
To utter aught but pleasant words to thee
Then hear his wish and as a dutious son
Look that thy father's will be quickly done
He though a king with most unkingly mind
Like a mean carter of the lowest kind
Would stint the honour and the boon deny
He swore to grant me in the days gone by
Faith holy faith whence all our duties spring
Should ne'er be lighted by our lord the king

Not e'en in anger, not for thy dear sake,
May he his oath and plighted promise break.
He will not say what promised boon I seek ,
Before thy face he will not, dare not, speak
Do thou but swear his promise shall not fall
Lost to the ground, and I will tell thee all '

She ceased Then Rama, with a troubled breast,
These words in answer to the Queen addrest -
'Thou needst not utter words like these to me -
To do his will my highest joy must be
To feed the flames my body I will throw ;
Drink deadly poison, if his will be so ;
Plunge in the tide if he would have it done,
My sire, my master, and my king in one
Then speak, O lady , with no doubting heart
The secret longing of my sire impart.
I swear obedience let my word suffice,
For tis not Rama's wout to promise twice '

Then spoke Kaikeyi to the noble youth,
Undaunted champion of the rights of truth .

When the God aided by thy father's might
Waged with the fiends of yore their furious fight
Wounded by many a dart the Monarch fell
And I preserved the life I loved so well
Restored by me to health and strength he swore
To grant two boons the guardian of my care
And these at length I crave this day may be
The throne for Bharat and the woods for thee
Now if his honour in thine eyes be dear
Keep his fair fame from stain of falsehood clear
Go to the distant wilderness and wear
The hermit's mantle and the matted hair
Nine years and five in the wild forest stay
That Bharat may be lord ordained to day
And then this land rich in each precious thing
Steed car and elephant shall hail him King
Moved with great pity for thy mournful case
Thy father cannot look upon thy face
Come noble Prince his darling honour save
And firm in faith observe the oath he gave

The hero answered tranquil and sedate

That cruel speech, fell as the doom of Fate
'Fear not, O lady, but thy wish obtain
My father's faith shall ne'er be pledged in vain
With hermit's mantle and with matted hair
Forth to the woods, an exile, will I fare
One thing alone, O Queen, I fain would learn
Why is my lord the King to-day so stern ?
Why is he now so silent and so cold,
Without one smile to greet me as of old ?
My greatest joy is ever to fulfil
My king, my master, and my father's will ,
One only care torments my anxious breast,
Why his own lips have not his will expressed
Why could he not himself to me make known
His choice of Bharat for the royal throne
To Bharat's hand I gladly would resign
My bride, my life, my gold, and all that's mine
Unasked, most freely would I give him all
How much more gladly 'at my father's call '
How much more gladly when the gift may free
His fame from blemish and give joy to thee !
Let swiftest heralds ordered by the King,

Home from thy brother's house thy Bharat bring
 To judge my father's words I will not stay
 But seek the forest ere the close of day
 There live a banisht man four years and ten
 Keeping the promise of the King of men

His well she answered Let the herald speed
 Carried by coursers of the fleetest breed
 And bring my Bharat home Methinks that thou
 Wilt brook no farrying nor linger now
 And if the King overwhelmed with shame could find
 No tongue to tell thee bear not this in mind
 But best of youths until thou hence art fled
 Thy sire will neither bathe nor call for bread

Woe! woe! the Monarch murmured with a groan
 Deep neath the waves of whelming anguish thrown
 Then in exceeding grief he swooned away
 And on the gold wrought couch all senseless lay
 Then Rama raised him while Kaikeyi's tongue
 Still urged him like a horse by lashes stung

Unmoved he answered 'Queen, I strive to do
My duty only, like the sages true ,
Nor would I, with a soul athirst for gain,
False to my promise, in the world remain
All I can do to please my father, think
Already done . from death I would not shrink .
One duty, paramount of duties still,
Is that a son should do his father's will
By him unbidden, if the word thou give,
Will I an exile in the forest live
Couldst thou no virtue in my nature see
That thou must crave of him, not ask of me ?
This day I go in Dandak's wilds to dwell :
First to my mother I must bid farewell,
And comfort Sita Thine the charge must rest
That Bharat listen to his sue's behest,
And keep the kingdom happy and secure .
This is the law that ever shall endure '

In speechless woe the hapless father heard,
And wept with bitter cry but spoke no word

Then bowing at the senseless Monarch's feet
And stern Kaikeyi's for such love unmeet
Once round the pair his circling steps he bent
Then from the bower the glorious exile went.
Him followed Lakshman sweet Sumitra's child
With angry weeping eyes so sad and wild
And Rama saw nor turned his eyes away
The sacred vessels ranged for that great day
And golden chalices whose waters shed
O'er his young brows had sanctified his head
He saw and round them in due honour paced
His eye no anguish showed his foot no haste
Still on his brow with lofty hope o'erthrown
Shone the great glory which was all his own
So will the moon through the world's love retain
Delicious splendour in the days of wane

MOTHER AND SON.



Rama goes from the presence of his afflicted father and exulting step-mother to pay a farewell visit to Kausalya, who is full of joyful anticipations on her son's account

On to his mother's splendid bower, he went,
And found the Queen on holy rites intent
There oil, and rice, and humming vases stood,
With wreaths of flowers, and curds, and cakes, and wood.
She with her thin cheek pale with many a fast,
And many a night in painful vigil past,
In linen robes of purest white arrayed,
To Lakshmi Queen of Heaven her offerings made
Soon as she saw the darling of her soul,
As a fond mare who springs to meet her foal

To greet her son unseen so long she flew
 And round his neck her tender arms she threw
 May all the glories of thy royal line
 She cried with kisses on his brow be thine
 Be wise and mighty like thy sires of old
 Be good and noble pious lofty souled
 This day thy father's faithful love is shown
 This day he sets thee on his ancient throne

Then answered Rama Dearest lady know
 That danger threatens fraught with mighty woe
 My father's choice this day makes Bharat heir
 And I must hence to Dandak's wood and there
 Living on fruit and honey hermit's food
 Pass twice seven dreary years in solitude

Swift as a Sal branch by the woodman lopt
 In some primeval grove the lady dropt
 And lay upon the ground So falls a mare
 Beneath the load she strives in vain to bear
 And Rama raised her up and brusht away
 The dust that on her arm and shoulder lay

'A grief more sore,' she cried, 'I ne'er could mourn
If thou hadst never, O my son, been born,
Yet, well I know, their childless fate, to those
Who pine for offspring, is the crown of woes
I, eldest queen, to those I scorn, must bend,
And let my rival's taunt my bosom rend
What woman's lot can be so hard as mine,
In endless woe and mourning doomed to pine?
Have they not scorned me when my son was near?
And death will follow when thou art not here
'Twas ne'er my lot my husband's love to gain,
And now I'm mockt by proud Kaikeyi's train,
And those who served me once, a faithless band,
Now far aloof in gloomy silence stand
How shall I brook her scolding tongue to hear,
And, better far than she, her anger fear?
Since thou wast born ('tis seventeen years ago)
I still have lookt to thee to end my woe
Now what remains but shame and grief, a share
Of trouble heavier than my soul can bear!
How will my gloomy days go darkly by
Without thy moon-bright face to cheer mine eye?

Alas my cares thy tender years to train
 And all my vows and fasts and prayers were vain
 Hard is my heart, or surely it had burst
 When the wild rush of sorrow reacht it first
 As in the Rains no river bank can hold
 The headlong torrent from the mountains rolled
 Ah no! my death is not allowed by Fate
 Nor opes for me the Gloomy King his gate
 He will not take me to his home away
 A lion pitying his weeping prey
 Death will not listen to a wretch's cry
 Nor take his soul ere fate would have him die
 Or I bereaved of my son had fled
 To Yama's¹ home and been among the dead
 Why should I live without thee? I will go
 After thee Rama, though my steps be slow
 As a poor cow in her great love will run
 Watching the wanderings of her little one

While sad Kausalya wept and groined and sighed
 Thus moved with righteous anger Lakshman cried

¹ The Indian Pluto

'O venerable Queen, I like it not
That Rama, victim of a woman's plot,
Should fly an exile to the woods, and leave
The land to languish and his friends to grieve
The King, luxurious, doting, old, and weak,
Will hear her voice and, as she orders, speak
But why should Rama, pure of sin and stain,
Flee from his kingdom to a life of pain ?
What man could ever, deaf to duty's call,
Forsake his godlike son beloved of all ?
What son that father's senseless will obey,
In second childhood 'neath a woman's sway ?
Come, Rama, come, and ere this plot be known
Accept my succour and secure the throne
Before thy face what foe will dare to stand
When thou art guarded by my good right hand ?
Nay, like the grisly Monarch of the Dead,
Thine eye alone will strike the bold with dread.
Or, if thou wilt, mine arrows and my bow
Shall lay all dwellers in Ayodhya low
So shall the foemen find mine arm is strong ,
The patient ever are the prey of wrong.

Nay were it not that Queen Kaikeyi's art
 Has swayed our father and destroyed his heart
 My voice should now his ruthless hate arraign
 And cry The Monarch shall be slain be slain
 Queen by this bow and by my faith I swear
 To thy dear Rama such the love I bear
 Come life come death our path shall be the same
 To the wild forest or the deadly flame
 Come try my love and let me prove my might
 Before thy presence and in Rama's sight
 Before my power thy woe shall flee away
 As the night flees before the morning day

O Rama hear him thus with streaming eyes
 Cried sad Kausalya for his words are wise
 Wilt thou obedient to my rival's will
 Please her who hates thee and thy mother kill?
 If love and honour to thy sire be due
 Hast thou no honour for thy mother too?
 My life were woe without thee but how sweet
 With thee dear son though grass were all my meat

But if no prayers thy firm resolve can bend,
I fly to death my hopeless woe to end,
And thou thy mother's murderer, wilt bear
The punishment of Hell and torment there'

'Forgive me, mother,' thus the hero spake,
'I have no power my sire's command to break
See, at thine honoured feet I bend me low.
Once more forgive me, for I needs must go.
Not I the first this path of duty tread.
Of yore 'twas trodden by the mighty dead
Now let me hear, dear Queen, thy kind farewell;
But if I go in distant wilds to dwell,
'Tis not for ever, mother, that I leave
My home and thee Again thou shalt receive
Thy son with rapture, all his exile o'er,
Then be thou comforted and grieve no more'
'If thou wilt listen to no prayers of mine,
Go forth,' she cried, 'thou best of Raghu's line'
Go forth, my darling, and return with speed,
And tread the path where noble spirits lead

May Virtue ever on thy steps attend
And thee her lover from all woe defend
May all the Gods to whom thy vows are paid
And all the mighty saints afford their aid
The heavenly arms that Viswamitra¹ gave
Thy precious life in hours of danger save¹
Thy filial love and meek obedience arm
Thy soul my Rama like a mystic charm¹
May every shrine where sacred grass is spread
And every altar where the flame is led
Lake and wild mountain bush and towering tree
Give ready succour O my son to thee
May Vishnu Brahma and the Sun befriend
And all the Powers their high protection lend
The years the seasons months and nights and day
And hours watch over thee in all thy ways¹
Eternal Scripture and the Law revealed
To ancient sages be thy trusty shield¹
The War God aid thee and the Moon on high
And wise Brihaspati be ever nigh

¹ A saint the friend and preceptor of Rama

Thy help be Narad ¹ and the sainted Seven,
And the great liminary Lords of Heaven ^{1 2}
Yea, these shall guard thee, when their praise I sing,
The hills, the waters, and the waters' King
The sky and ether, earth and wandering air,
Protect thee ever with their fostering care ¹
Each lunar mansion be for thee benign
With happier light for thee the planets shine ¹
Thou shalt not fear, by guardian angels screened,
The savage giant or night-roving fiend.
Before thy steps let cruel tigers flee,
Let bears and lions never injure thee,
And mighty elephants that wander wild
Forbear to touch thy life, my noble child.
May all thy ways be happy ¹ may success
With golden fruit thy hope and labour bless !
Loved by all Gods around, above, below,
Go forth, my son, my pride and glory, go !²

¹ A son of Brahma

² Eight Gods, Regents of the four quarters and intermediate points of the compass.

Then on his knees before her Rama fell
Prest her dear feet and said his last farewell
And radiant with the light her blessings lent
To Sita's home his anxious steps he bent

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE.



but Rama's hardest trial yet remains, the parting from Sita his lovely and beloved wife. He briefly tells her of his altered lot, and bids her in his absence carefully discharge her duties to the Gods, his father, the three queens, the new King Bharat and his brothers. She tells him that man and wife are not thus to be parted, and declares that whithersoever he goes she will go also. In vain he sets before her the dangers and miseries that wait on banishment. Truth smiles at fear, and Love sees a Paradise in the wild with him. Rama yields to the passionate prayers of his devoted wife and allows her to accompany him to the forest.¹



As through his stately halls the hero past,
His eye was drooping and his brow o'ercast
And Sita rose and trembled, quick to trace
The thought and sorrow on his darkened face,

¹ A version of part of this scene, from Gorresio's edition of the Bengali recension of the Ramayana, has appeared, under the title of 'Sita,' in *Idylls from the Sanskrit*. The main features are the same in both, but the details slightly differ.

For his strong bosom could no longer bear
 The load of anguish that was heavy there
 Soon as she markt the clammy drops that hung
 On his pale cheek she cried with faltering tongue
 What ails thee O my lord ? This happy day
 Should see thee joyful all but thou art gay
 Why does no royal canopy like foam
 For its white beauty shade thee to thy home ?
 Where are the tuneful bard thy deeds to sing ?
 Where are the fan that wave before the King ?
 Why doth the city send no merry throng
 To bring thee home with melody and song ?
 Why doth no gilded car thy triumph lead
 With four brave horses of the swiftest breed ?
 No favoured elephant precede the crowd
 Like a black mountain or a thunder cloud ?
 No herald march in front of thee to hold
 The precious burthen of thy throne of gold ?
 If thou be King ordained this day then why
 This sorry plight pale cheek and gloomy eye ?

The Sita questioned in her wild suspense

And Rama said . ‘ My father sends me hence
An exile to the forest hear me tell
The story, Sita, as it all befell
Of old, to Queen Kaikeyi, bound by oath,
Two boons he granted now she claims them both
All was prepared for me my father now
Is forced by Duty’s mightier law to bow ,
So Bharat sits upon the throne, and I
For twice seven years to distant forests fly
Only to see thee ere we part, I came
And now, dear Sita, never praise my name
In Bharat’s presence others’ praise to hear
Is néver welcome to a monarch’s ear.
To him my father gives divided sway
Do thou with willing love his rule obey
With tender care the King’s desire prevent ,
Be ever gentle, humble, and content.
I go be firm and strong, my noble spouse,
Keep well thy fasts and guard thy holy vows
Rise from thy bed when day begins to break,
And to the Gods thy constant offerings make
Then let the King thy duteous thoughts engage,

And cheer Kausalya worn with woe and age
Then to the consort-queens thy love be shown
They are my mothers even as mine own
And O forget not Rama's brothers claim
Loved like his life the love of Rama's dame
And never vex King Bharat's soul for he
Is lord of all the land our house and thee
Then here obedient to his will remain
Honour thy King and all thy vows maintain

Beseems she cried this speech thy royal race,
To thee a blot to me a foul disgrace ?
Master of weapons lord of deadly strife
Hear thou the duty of a warrior's wife
Know that the father mother brother son
Obtain the lot thou former deeds have won
The wife alone her husband's fate must share
And in thy trouble I my part will bear
For not on father mother son or friend
But on her husband must the wife depend
And if thou seek the wood thy wife has sworn
To smooth thy path nor let thy feet be torn

No guile is in me from thy bosom throw
The dregs of doubt, and give me leave to go
I spurn the terrace and the pleasant seat
Mine be the joy to guard thy cherished feet
Obedient ever to my parents' sway,
I will not hearken if they bid me stay
I will go forth, the lonely wood to roam
The lion's dwelling and the tiger's home
Happy and heedless, from all terror free
Careless of empire caring but for thee
With thee, delighted, will I wander where
Blooms dropping honey, scent the woodland air
Obeying thee and keeping still my vow
I will not tremble by thy side, for thou
Wouldst keep a stranger safe, and, sure, thine arm
Will guard thy Sister from all fear of harm
I will not be a charge to thee sweet fruits
The trees will yield me, and the earth her roots
I will go first and, treading down the grass,
Make the way pleasant for my love to pass
On the soft turf disclose my gathered store
And sit and banquet when thy meal is o'er

O how I long dear lord to gaze my fill
 Guarded by thee on lake and wood and hill
 See the red lilies in their native springs
 And gay flamingoes with their rosy wings
 And o'er my limbs those pleasant waters poured
 Shall banish languor O my large-eyed lord
 A thousand years would seem a single day
 If spent with thee but were my love away
 Heaven would not charm me O be sure of this
 Without my love there is no Heaven no bliss

Lost in deep thought while the hero stood
 And feared to lead her to the lonely wood
 With soothing words he strove her tears to dry
 And gently answered with a moistened eye
 O virtuous daughter of a noble line
 To hear my words thy tender heart incline
 Here duteous ever still in peace remain
Life in the woods is naught but grief and pain
 There roars the lion in his rocky cave
 Loud as the torrents down the hill that rave

There savage beasts in horrid ambush lie
And rend the heedless wretch who passes by.
Floods where the crocodile delights to play,
And furious elephants the eye dismay.
Then on the gale the wolf's long howl is borne
Through a wide wilderness of sand and thorn
On the cold ground or on a scanty heap
Of gathered leaves the homeless wretch must sleep,
And stay his hunger with what fruit the blast
Hurls from the branches for his sad repast.
A coat of bark or skin his only wear,
Rough and untrimmed must be his matted hair
Now on a snake the heedless foot will fall,
Now in thy path a deadly scorpion crawl,
And slimy reptiles creeping from the lake,
And clouds of gnats, thy troubled slumber break.
Enough, dear love, the wood is full of fear
Remain, my Sita, and be happy here.'

Then Sita spoke once more with weeping eyes,
Her voice half mastered by her sobs and sighs .

'The woe the terror all the toil and pain
Joined with thy love to me are joy and gain
Lion and tiger elephant and boar
And all the monsters thou hast counted o'er
Soon as my Rama's glorious form they see
In trembling fear will turn away and flee.
Not Indra's self the ruler of the sky
Would dare to harm me when my lord is nigh
Long years ago I heard a sage foretell
That in the woods should be my fate to dwell
The time is come now make that promise true
And when thou goest take thy Sita too
O let me go whatever I may endure
Following thee will make my soul more pure
So joy shall crown me in the after life
For thou art God unto thy loving wife.
Hear the high truth which saintly priests declare
The after life rejoins the wedded pair
But if thou wilt to no entreaties bend
Poison or flood or flame my life shall end
Fear not for me when by thy side I go
My happy feet will never weary grow

Though wild and rough the thorny ways I tread,
They shall feel softer than a silken bed
When the wild wind with dust my raiment dims,
I'll call it perfume to refresh my limbs
And when with thee in grassy glades I lie,
Watching the landscape with delighted eye
Till, by thy side, I gently sink to rest
What thing on earth shall be so richly blest ?
The fruit thy dear hand gives me there to eat,
Little or much, shall be like amrit sweet
Ne'er will I murmur at my lot, or grieve
For mother, father, or the home I leave
My food shall be wild fruit, the flower, the weed
I will not vex thee by a word or deed
With thee is Heaven, where'er thou art not, Hell
O, lead me hence that I in heaven may dwell '
Then with a bitter cry her arms she flung
Round Rama's neck, and there in anguish clung
While from her eyes pure floods, as from a pair
Of lotuses, poured down at every prayer

He gently held her raised her drooping head,

And stand the sweet soul that had wellnigh fled
Not Heaven shall bribe me from my wife to part
I knew not love the strength of thy fond heart
And hence in doubt thy prayer I first denied
Though naught can harm thee by thy Rama's side
Yea, thou wast formed by Heaven to share my fate
To soothe my sorrows and divide their weight
As powerless I to leave my love behind
As a high saint his pity for mankind
And now my duty leads me far away
My sire commands it and I must obey
Whatever the order that my parents give
I yield obedience or must cease to live
No Sita not the sacrificial blaze
True heart or liberal hand or lip of praise
Will with such lasting joy the spirit fill
As glad obedience to a father's will
Come to the wood and aid my duties there
But first at home thy helping hand prepare
Arise dear wife nor let thy steps be slow
Scatter our treasures quickly ere we go
Bring forth thy corn and oil the poor to feast

Give gold and jewels to each white-robed priest,
Gems and rich raiment, all thou hast beside,
Among thy maidens and the men divide'

Then Lakshman's eyes with generous tears overflowed,
As his breast laboured with its grievous load
He with fond touch his brother's feet caress'd,
And thus the hero and his wife address'd
'Is such the purpose of thy changeless mind?
I with my trusty bow will walk behind
Thy distant way through forest wilds will lead,
Where many a bird and gallant stag may bleed
I would not leave thee to arise a God,
Though heaven and earth and hell obeyed my nod'

'Dear as my life, my good and faithful friend,
Mine own dear brother,' Rama cried, 'attend
Then were Sumitra of her hope bereft,
And sad Kausalya with no guardian left
He who rains gifts, as Indra rains above,
Lies a poor captive in the snares of love ,

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE.

And she proud captor now a queen indeed
Will reck but little of her rivals need.
Tune be the sacred duty to protect
Our honoured mothers from the Queen's neglect

O Rama, fear not Lakshman thou replied
In Bharat's love and Bharat's care confide
If through his crime the kingdom suffer ill
My vengeful hand the traitor's blood shall spill
Yea though auxiliar worlds were ranged in aid
They should not save him be not thou afraid
And Queen Kausalya, from her ample store
Can raise a host like me to guard her doors
Her thousand hamlets rich with golden grain
Will keep her nobly and a regal train
Turn me not back allow the earnest claim
Which all will own and hardly thou canst blame
I shall rejoice and thou wilt fain confess
Thy brother's presence makes thy labour less
For in my hand I'll bear my shafts and bow
A spade and basket o'er my shoulder throw

I'll go before thee, and with watchful care
The way for Sita and for thee prepare
I'll fetch thee roots and berries, ripe and sweet,
And the best fruits that gentle hermits eat
Thou shalt with Sita on the slopes recline,
And all the labour shall be only mine '

And Rama answered, joying at his speech
'Then seek thy friends and bid farewell to each ,
And those two bows of heavenly fabric bring
Which Ocean's Lord erst gave Videha's King , '
Those death-fraught quivers, coats of steel-proof mail,
And swords whose flashes make the sunbeams pale '

¹ Janaka, father of Sita.

FAREWELL !

Rama his wife and brother walk through the streets crowded with mourning citizens to the palace of Dasaratha. They bid the king farewell and then leave Ayodhya amid the tears and lamentations of the people.

Their gold and gems among the Brahmans shared
 The bows were brought, the swords and mail prepared
 On which fair Sita with her faultless hand
 Set here a flower there tied a silken band
 Then to the palace walked the royal three
 For the last time the aged king to see
 Through crowds that filled as for a festive show,
 Street balcony, and roof and portico

Ah ! look our hero ever went to ride
 Leading an army in its pomp and pride —

Now only Lakshman, faithful to the end,
And his true wife, his weary steps attend
Though his bright soul has known the sweets of power
Though his free hand poured gifts in endless shower,
Yet firm in duty, resolute and brave,
He keeps the promise that his father gave
And she, whose sweet face, delicately fair,
Not e'en the wandering spirits of the air
Might look upon, unveiling to the day
Walks, seen of all, along the open way
Alas, her beauty ! Ah, that tender form !
How will it change beneath the sun and storm :
How will the piercing cold, the rain, the heat,
Pale her dear lips and stain her perfect feet !
Come, all ye mourners, share his weal and woe,
And follow Rama wheresoe'er he go
Let us arise, our wives and children call,
And leave our fields and gardens, homes and all
Our houses, empty of their store of grain,
With grass-grown courtyard and deserted lane
Our ruined chambers, where the voice is still
Of women singing as they turn the mill .

Groves where no children sport in thoughtless glee
 Nor elders sit beneath the mango tree
 The falling shop with none to buy or sell
 The pond choked up with weeds the broken well
 Neglected temples whence the Gods have fled
 Overrun with rats with dust and dirt overspread
 Where floats no incense on the evening air
 No hum of worship and no Brahman's prayer
 Where broken vessels strew the unswept floor
 And the chain rusts upon the mouldering door —
 The let the greedy Queen Kaikeyi triumph
 And triumph in her melancholy reign
 Our town shall be a wilderness where he
 Our town lives the wood our town shall be
 The snake shall leave his hole the bear his den
 And settle in the empty homes of men
 Such were the words of sorrow that the throng
 Spoke loudly out as Rama past along
 And his hard fate in faithful love bewailed
 Yet not for this his lofty spirit failed

On to the palace of the King he pressed

And thus Sumantra at the gate addrest

‘ I pray thee, haste and let my father know

‘That Rama craves a blessing ere he go’

He lingered not, but hastened where the King

Lord of the world, lay sadly sorrowing ,

Changed like the sun behind a misty cloud ,

Like the quencht flame which dust and ashes shroud ,

Like a broad lake with its sweet waters dried

With a slow faltering voice Sumantra cried

‘ Long be thy days, O King ’ ‘Thy Rama waits,

Thy lion-lord of men, before the gates

His weeping friends his last farewell have heard,

Graced with a precious gift and pleasant word

And now he longs his father’s face to see,

And take a blessing, ere he go, of thee’

‘ Haste,’ cried the King, ‘ my queens and ladies call,

And bid my servants throng into the hall ’

Quick at the Monarch’s word he called each dame,

And half seven hundred at the summons came.

When all were present at the King’s behest,

Rama and Lakshman in their armour drest,

Came toward the hall with anxious ladies lined
And gentle Sita meekly came behind
But the old King ere Rama yet was nigh
Sprang from his throne and with a bitter cry
Ran forth to meet him but his limbs gave way
And falling prostrate on the ground he lay
And Rama threw him by his father's side
And gently called him but no voice replied
Then with a mighty wail the hall was rent
A thousand women in one wild lament
Cried Rama Rama and the silver sound
Of tinkling ornaments their wrists that bound
The King unconscious on a couch was laid
And weeping Sita lent her tender aid
And with her healing care restored him then
Rama spoke reverent to the King of men

O father thou both sire and sovereign art
Bless me I pray thee for to-day we part
Lakshman and Sita will not here remain
Counsel is useless and entreaty vain

Refuse them not, but grant thy kind consent
That they may follow as their heart is bent
And now as kings dismiss their people, so
Grieve not, O lord, but bless and let us go'
He stood expecting when the King should speak
Who answered, 'Rama, I am old and weak,
By Queen Kaikeyi's cruel guile misled
Rule thou Ayodhya in thy father's stead'
And Rama cried 'A thousand years retain
Thy sceptre, King I have no wish to reign
I in the wild my destined years will spend,
And clasp thy feet returning when they end
This populous land, which I this day resign,
Let Bharat rule, with all its coin and kine
And from Kaikeyi do not thou withhold
Aught thy tongue promised in the days of old
By thy good deeds and by thy truth I swear
I crave not Heaven or all the glories there
Wealth, lordship, life are worthless in mine eyes
One thing alone above the rest I prize,
That thou, my King and sire, shouldst still remain
Untoucht in honour without spot or stain

Weep not for me thy troubled bosom still
 Nor hope with tears to change my changeless will
 My word is pledged as well as thine for know
 Kaikevi prayed me and I swear to go
 Grieve not the forest will have charms for me
 Where sweet birds sing and wild deer wander free
 Swift will the years of easy exile run
 And thou once more shalt see restored thy son

Make ready cried the king a mighty force
 With cars and elephants and foot and horse
 Equip them nobly with the utmost care
 Silver and gold and purple gems prepare
 Let various traders with the wealth they sell
 Come from the city and the concourse swell
 And singing women full of form and face
 The royal progress of Prince Rama grace
 Let every noble whom he counts his friend
 Fright with precious gifts his lord attend
 Let the best arms in many a ponderous wain
 And skilful huntsmen follow in his train

It may be that the banisht Prince may blunt
Each sting of memory in the eager hunt
And, as he sucks the wild-bee's balmy spoil,
Forget his kingdom and enjoy the toil
Let all my gold, and boundless wealth of corn,
To the wild forest, where he goes, be borne
For it will sweeten the poor exile's lot
To sacrifice in every holy spot
To give rich offerings as he roams, and meet
Each saintly hermit in his lone retreat'

And Rama answered 'Useless, Sire, to me
The host, the riches, and the pomp would be
For I, the world and all its lusts resigned,
Have left its pride and joys and cares behind
My home is now the wilderness, and there
The hermit's life awaits, the hermit's fare
Give me no banners o'er my head to float,
All I now covet is the hermit's coat.'

And Queen Kaikeyi, with unblushing brow,
Cried, 'See, 'tis ready take and wear it now'

The hero took it from her hand and threw
His own fine robe upon the ground and drew
The rough bark mantle on So Lakshman braced
His dress removed the bark around his waist
But modest Sita in her silks arrayed
Eyed the strange mantle trembling and afraid
As from Kaikeyi's hand the coat she took
She viewed it with a startled wondering look
As in the brake beside the stream a deer
Looks at the hunter's snare with doubt and fear
With weeping eyes like a poor bleating lamb
That runs with trembling feet to find its dam
She nestled closely to her Rama's side
And in her soft low faltering accents cried
Tell me how hermits dwelling in the wood
Tie their bark mantles on Perplexed she stood
Shrinking in modest dread while one small hand
Strove at the neck to join the rugged band

Then quickly hastening Rama first and best
Of Virtue's children o'er her silken vest

Fastened the coat of bark Then rose a cry
From all the women, and each tender eye
Dropt water 'Rama, leave us Sita, she
Shares not the cruel doom that falls on thee
Hear us, we pray thee, let thy Sita stay
To bless our sight while thou art far away'

Then spoke the Sovereign's venerable guide,
Sainted Vasishtha, as he deeply sighed
Looking on Sita in her coat of bark
'O cruel Queen Kaikeyi, fell and dark
In purpose, evil-hearted, thou disgrace
To thy great father and thy royal race
Deceiver of thy lord, thy plots are vain,
For still will Sita in her home remain,
And sit as rightful ruler on the throne
Prepared for Rama, till he claim his own
The pair who live in wedlock's sweet control
Form but one heart and mind and self and soul
She, Rama's self, shall Rama's kingdom sway,
And we with joy her gentle rule obey

If he resolve to share her husband's woe
 We all will follow where our lady goes
 Our wife and children our young men and maids
 Will roam with Rama through the forest glades
 Nay, thy son Bharat and Satruguna too
 Will to Ayodhya bid a long adieu
 Around their limbs the hermit girl to fold
 And serve their elder brother as of old
 Do thou, rejecting in the people's bane
 Enjoy mid empty homes thy lonely reign
 For tis no kingdom where our King is not
 He make an empire in the wildest spot

Sumantra bowing with his reverent head
 Upraised his suppliant hands to Rama and
 My ready car O royal Prince attend
 And where thou wilt my rapid course I bend
 With cheerful heart her toilet task complete
 The Rose of women rose and took her seat
 And Rama next and Lakshman true and bold
 Sprang on the sun bright chariot deckt with gold

Sumantia, mounted, urged each willing steed
Of noble lineage, like the wind for speed

Then rose to heaven one universal shriek ,
And the whole city, old, young, strong, and weak
Rusht toward the car, as, from the scorching sun,
The panting herds to shaded water run
Before the chariot and behind they hung,
And cried with weeping eyes, as there they clung
'O check thy steeds , drive slower, we implore,
And let us see our Rama's face once more,
His mother's heart is surely barred with steel,
Or it had broken`with the pangs we feel
Sita, well done ! Videha's flower and pride,
Still, like his shadow, by thy husband's side,
Cheering his path with thy loved presence still,
As the sun never sets on Meru's hill ¹
And thou, O Lakshman, shalt have honour too,
Serving thy brother with a love so true
Yea, noblest honour for thy noble deeds,

¹ A sacred mountain placed by the Hindus in the centre of the seven continents of which the earth is made up. It is said to be 84,000 *yojana* high (a *yojana* is reckoned variously at four and nine miles). Its summit is the residence of the God Brahma.

For this the path to heaven and bliss that leads

Thus in their sorrow cried the weeping throng
'Drive on' said Rama 'we delay too long'
From the men's eyes the tears in torrents flowed
And laid the dust upon the royal road
While in the woe that rent their bosoms all
The women rained their tears like drops that fall
From the drencht lotus leaves upon the lake
Which darting fish glittering under shake.
The king as Rama from his sight was borne
Fell like a Sal tree by the roots upturn
And the loud wailing cry that rent the skies
Made Rama for a moment turn his eyes
Where his sad mother and her train stood round
His hapless father fainting on the ground
Then as a young thing in the meshes caught
Looks to its mother with a quick glance fraught
With utter anguish bound by duty's chain
Gazing in most intolerable pain
One long last look of love and grief he cast
Then urged the steeds till out of sight he part

KAUSALYA'S LAMENT.

A

Then Queen Kausalya to her husband spake
 With tears and sighs as though her heart would break
 'O thou whose glories through the wide worlds reach,
 Gentle, compassionate, and kind of speech,
 Think, how will Sita nursed with tender care,
 And thy two sons, then grievous hardships bear !
 How will our darling, framed of finest mould,
 Endure the rain and wind, the heat and cold !
 How in the woods her tender life sustain,
 With no sweet viands, only fruit and grain !
 How bear the ravening lion's voice of fear,
 She, to whom music and the song were dear !
 Where sleeps my Rama now ? Ah ! cold his bed,
 His arm the pillow of the Prince's head

KAUSALYA'S LAMENT

When shall I see him with his glorious hair
Eyed like the lotus like the lotus fair?
Full well I know when years are past and he
Returns from exile to his home and me
His brother's leavings he will scorn nor deign,
The rightful King in Bharat's stead to reign
The tasted morsel he will cast away
The tiger feeds not on another's prey
First on her lord O King the wife depends
Next on her son and then on kin and friends
Thy love my lord twas never mine to win
My son is banisht, far my kith and kin
I had but these and thou hast left me none
Bereaved forlorn despised and all undone'

THE HERMIT'S SON.

"But the exiles were no sooner gone than the aged monarch drooped in sadness. "Six days he sat and mourned, and pined for Rama all that weary time." In the middle of the seventh night a crime, inadvertently committed in his youth, rose up in his mind. he sought sympathy from Kausalya his firstwife, the mother of the banished Rama, and asked her to listen to his tale, for to this he attributed his present affliction." Mrs SPENCER.

Heavy was his soul within him, still in Dasaratha's breast
 Memory of woe kept brooding and forbade the King to rest
 Deep despair upon his spirit, mourning for his Rama, lay,
 As when clouds have veiled the glory of the parting Lord of
 Day
 As he thought with bitter anguish of the deed his hand had
 done,
 Spake he sorrowing to Kausalya sighing weeping for her son

Art thou waking mournful lady? Give me all thy listen
ing ear,

Hearken to a tale of sorrow to an ancient deed of fear
Surely each shall reap the harvest of his actions here below
Righteous deed shall bear a blessing sin shall ever bring
forth woe

Tis a deed of youthful folly brings on me this evil day
As a young child tasting poison eats his death in heedless
play

Twas a day of early rain time, filling my young soul with
love

When the sun had dried the earth-dews with his hot beams
from above

And in highest heaven returning journeyed on his southward
road

Speeding to the gloomy region the Departed's sad abode
Balmy cool the air was breathing welcome clouds were float
ing by

Humming bees with joyful music swelled the glad wild per
cock's cry

Their wing feathers wet with bathing, birds slow flying to
the trees

Rested in the topmost branches waving to the western breeze
Like the Ocean many-twinkling, gold-shot with gay peacocks'
shcen,

Gleaming with the fallen rain-drops, sea-bright all the hills
were seen ;

While like serpents, winding swiftly, torrents from the moun-
tain's side

Hissed along, some brightly flashing, turbid some and ochre-
dyed

With my bow in that glad season to fair Sarju's stream I drove,
Bent to try my archer prowess in a dark and stately grove
There I lay in ambush hidden by the river's reedy side,
Where the beasts that roam the forest sought at eve the cool-
ing tide

Hark ' a sound of troubled water from the neighbouring
stream I heard .

All was dark and still around me, not a breath the branches
stirréd

Eager to lay low the monster forth a glittering shaft I drew ,
Poisonous as serpent's venom from my string the arrow flew
Then I heard a bitter wailing and a voice of direst pain
Calling out ' Ah me, unhappy ! Dearest father, I am slain '

Writhing on the bank in anguish sobbingly one cried Ah me !
Wherefore has this arrow smitten a poor harmless devotee ?
Here at eve to fill my pitcher to this lonely stream I came
Tell me whom I have offended, who my harmless act can
blame

Who could have the heart to kill me me the guiltless her
mit's child

Drinking from the stream and eating fruit and herbs he ga
thers wild ?

Would the slayer strip my body ? He will find but scanty
spoil

Coat of bark and deerskin mantle hardly will repay his toil
Tis not for myself I sorrow from mine aged parents torn
Long their stay and only succour to for their sad fate I
mourn

Who will feed them when I perish ? Wretched man whose er
thou art

Thou hast murdered father mother offspring all with one
fell dart

Horror seized my soul within me and my mind had well
nigh fled

In the still calm of evening as I heard the word he said

Rushing forward through the bushes on the river-bank I spied
Lying low a young ascetic with my shaft deep in his side
With his matted hair dishevelled, and his pitcher cast away,
From his side the life blood ebbing, smeared with dust and
gore he lay

Then he fixt his eyes upon me scarcely could my spirit
brook,

As these bitter words he uttered, that long last departing look
'Only to fetch water came I . tell me, wherefore do I bleed ?
Have I sinned against thee, Monarch ? Done thee wrong in
word or deed ?

Ah ! I'm not thine only victim cruel King, thy heedless dart
Pierces too a father's bosom and an aged mother's heart
They, my parents, blind and feeble, from this hand alone can
drink

When I come not, thirsting, hoping, sadly down in death they
'll sink

Naught from lore of studied Scripture, naught from penance
do I gain,

For my hapless father knows not his dear son is lying slain
Ah ! and if he knew me dying powerless to save were he,
As a tree can never rescue from the axe a fated tree

Hasten to him son of Raghu Tell my father of my fate
Lest his wrath like fire consume thee Hasten ere it be too
late

There within the shady forest is my father's hermitage
Go entreat him son of Raghu lest he curse thee in his rage
Thus he spake and I down kneeling drew the arrow from
his side

Then the hermit rich in penance fixt his eyes on me and
died

Motionless I stood in sorrow pondering in anxious thought
How to minister most kindly to the woe my hand had
wrought.

From the stream I filled the pitcher and fast speeding
through the wood

Reached the middle of the forest where the lowly cottage
stood

Talking of their son's long absence a poor aged sightless pair
Like two birds with clipped wings helpless none to guide them
sat they there

Sadly slowly I approached them by my rash deed left
forlorn

[torn

Crushed with terror was my spirit and my heart with anguish

At the sound of coming footsteps thus I heard the old man
say

'Dear son, bring the water quickly thou hast been too long
away

Bathing in the stream or playing heedless how the minutes
past

Come, thy mother longeth for thee Come, and cheer her heart
at last

Be not angry, mine own darling Thou hast never vexed us yet,
And if I have spoken harshly do forgive me and forget
Thou art thy poor parents' succour, eyes art thou unto the
blind

Speak, on thee our lives are resting Why so silent and un-
kind ?'

Thus I heard, yet deeper grieving, and in fresh augmented
woe

Spoke to the bereaved father with words faltering and slow
'I am not thy son, O hermit, but the ruler of the land,
Plunged with thee in woe and mourning by my own accursed
hand

There on Sarju's bank I wandered with my arrows and my
bow,

Bent to lay some prowling lion or a thirsty tiger low
Then I heard a sound of drinking all the place around was
dark

But I sent the deadly arrow Ah ! too truly to the mark
Bounding swiftly from my ambush to the river's bank I lied
Where a hermit's son lay dying with my arrow in his side
Forth I drew the deadly weapon Then his last lament was
given

To his aged helpless parents and his spirit went to heaven
Thus thy son O saintly hermit through my haste and folly
fell

Let deep sorrow win thy pardon for the deed I scarce can
tell

As he heard my mournful story pouring down his aged cheek
Came the torrent of his sorrow and his voice was low and
weak

King hadst thou concealed this horror this blood shedding
left untold

On thy head the sin had fallen with its fruit ten thousand
fold

For a Warrior stained with murder of a hermit above all [fall
from his high estate blood guilty were he Indra's self must

Lead us, King, by thee bereaved, lead us to the fatal place.
Let us fold our darling's body in a last and long embrace'
By the hand I led the mourners to the river where he lay
Fondly claspt the sightless parents in their arms the death-
cold clay

Bowed down by their load of sorrow sank they by the dead
boy's side,

And the sage in lamentation lifted up his voice and cried
'Hast thou not a greeting for me? Am not I thy father, dear?
Answer but one word, my darling Wherefore art thou lying
here?

Art thou angry with thy father? Speak to me, beloved one!
Surely thou wast ever dutious, look then on thy mother, son
Come dear child, embrace thy father, put thy little hand in
mine

Let me hear thee sweetly prattle some fond playful word of
thine

Who will read me now the Scripture, filling my old heart
with joy?

Who, when evening rites are ended cheer me mourning for
my boy? [spring?

Who will tend the helpless parents, fetch us water from the

Who will guide our feeble footsteps? Who will fruits and
berries bring?

Can I feed thine aged mother till her weary life is o'er?

Can I soothe her ever longing for the son who comes no more?

Stay dear child nor fly so quickly to grim Yama's dark abode

Stay thy father and thy mother will go with thee on the
road

In the wild wood all deserted none to aid us in our need

Quickly will thine aged parents tread the path for all decreed

Guiltless boy by sinners murdered join thine own immortal
band

In the heaven of slaughtered heroes slum on earth by other
kind

Hasten to thy blissful mansion welcome shalt thou be to
those

Who fell nobly here in battle with their bold front to their
foes

Then the funeral rites were finished by the parents' loving
care

And again the sage address'd me as I stood a suppliant there

Thou hast slum my well beloved I'll feed mine only child O
kind

Kill me too, the childless father death no longer has a sting.
But thou shalt not go unpunisht Wretched youth, thy
 breast shall know

Somewhat of the pangs I suffer, a bereaved father's woe

Thus I lay my curse upon thee for this slaughter done
 to-day

Thou for a dead son shalt sorrow, and thy life the debt shall
 pay '

THE TRIAL OF TRUTH

After Dasarath's death Bharata refused to accept the insignia of royalty which according to Hindu law was the heritag of his elder brother. We are not told how his mother behaved when he thus refused to aid her wicked schemes for his advancement but the Council resolved that if he would not be King himself he must go in pursuit of Rama, and persuade him to return and assume the sovereignty. The meeting between the brothers shows the utmost delicacy and generosity of feeling. Bharata lamenting his mother's ill conduct, and entreating Rama to return. Rama declining because unless he keeps his father's vow he cannot secure his father's happiness in heaven he therefore adjures his brother to return to Ayodhya and console the people and the twice-born. I with Sita and Lakshman will enter the forest of Dandaka. Be thou the King of men I will be sovereign of wild beasts. Let the umbrella shade thy head I will take refuge in the shade of the wood.

MRS SPENCER *Life in Ancient India*

Urge me no more thy words are fair
 But virtue's garb they falsely wear
 With pleasing art thy tongue misleads
 And lures me to ignoble deeds

For what is might or ancient race,
The pomp of wealth, the pride of place ?
'Tis virtue marks the line between
The great and good, the low and mean
And he from virtue's path who strays
To wander in forbidden ways,
Whate'er his birth, must hope in vain
The praises of the good to gain
Shall I the righteous path forsake,
The laws of duty foully break ?
Be scorned by all the good and just,
And lay mine honour in the dust ?
Shall Rama stain his soul with sin,
And lose the heaven he lives to win ?
Nor would the crime with Rama end
For countless lives on him depend
The people in their Prince behold
Their best example, guide, and mould,
And, by his vice or virtue led,
The path he walks they strive to tread
That truth and mercy still must be
Beloved of kings, is Heaven's decree

THE TRIAL OF TRUTH

Upheld by truth the monarch reigns
Nay truth the very world sustains
Truth evermore has been the love
Of saints below and Gods above
And endless bliss by truth is won
In Brahma's world beyond the sun
For holy truth is root and spring
Of virtue and each lovely thing
A mighty Lord supreme on earth
Fearless for beauty power and worth
A crown of glory still more fair
Than sacrifice and praise and prayer
Shall I thus heavenly gain despise
Attracted by an earthly prize
Shall I make idle lust of sway
My father's order disobey
And fly a duped or passionate
Force him to break the oath he gave
Shall I to gain my royal right
The clear command of duty slight
With lying lips my glory stain
And boldly sin for paltry gain?

For not alone by hand and thought
The soul of man with crime is fraught
Sin's meanest tool I count the third,
The tongue that speaks the lying word.
No, brother , urge this plea no more,
I still will keep the oath I swore .
Within the forest calmly dwell,
Contented with my hermit's cell,
Nor fail to give the Gods a share
Of offerings from my humble fare'

CHITRAKUTA

Rama with Sita and Lakshman has crossed the Gange and the Jumna and reached the distant forest in which he is to live. He points out to Sita some of the beauties of the surrounding scenery especially the mountain Chitrakuta and the river Mandakini.

Though reft of power and kingly sway
Though friends and home are far away
I cannot mourn my altered lot
Enraptured with this lovely spot
Look darling on this noble hill
Which sweet birds with their music fill
Tinged with a thousand metal dyes
His lofty summits kiss the skies
Here gleams a line of silvery sheen
There a broad streak of emerald green,

And next a belt of gold is spread, .
Made glorious by a fringe of red ,
While, higher as the peaks ascend,
Sunlight and flowers and crystal blend
See, dear, the trees that clothe his side,
All lovely in their summer pride,
In richest wealth of leaves arrayed,
With flower and fruit and light and shade
Look where the young Rose-apple glows ,
What loaded boughs the Mango shows '
See, waving in the western wind,
The light leaves of the Tamarind ,
And mark that giant Peepul through
Those feathery clumps of tall Bamboo
That depth of shade, that open lawn,
Allure the wood-nymph and the faun ,
And, where those grassy glades extend,
The spirits of the air descend
To while the summer night away
With dalliance and mirth and play
Look, from the mountain's woody head
Hangs many a stream like silver thread,

Till gathering strength each rapid rill
Leaps lightly laughing down the hill
Then bounding o'er the rocky wall
Flashes the foamy waterfall.
O lives there one too cold to feel
Delicious languor o'er him steal
As the young morning breeze that spring
From the cool cave on balmy wings
Breathes round him loaded with the scent
Of bud and blossom dew besprent !
See round the hill at random thrown
Those masses of primeval stone
Of every shape and many a hue
Yellow and black and red and blue
But all is fairer still by night
Each rock reflects a softer light
When the whole mount from foot to crest
In robes of lambent flame is drest
When from a million herbs a blaze
Of their own luminous glory plays
And clothed in fire each deep ravine
Each pinnacle and crag is seen

Dear Sita, Chitrakuta's height
Transports me with such pure delight,
With thee and Lakshman here to dwell
For many a year would please me well '

MANDAKINI

Home of the heron and the swan
 See the fair river glides
 With verdant isles to gem her breast
 And flowers to deck her sides
 With every tree of sweetest fruit
 And fairest bloom that springs
 And glorious as the lucid stream
 Where bathes the King of Kings¹
 How lovely are those shelving banks
 Now dotted o'er with deer
 That sully as they quench their thirst
 The waves that were so clear

¹ A title of Kuber the God of Wealth. The beauty of his pleasure grounds is proverbial.

Look, darling, to that point below,
 Those holy hermits mark
I know them by their matted hair
 And by their coats of bark
See, on the river bank they stand,
 Their early bathing done ,
Lifting their aged hands in prayer
 They reverence the sun
O look ' the merry wind is up
 And scatters leaves around
The very mountain seems to dance
 With bending forests crowned
Behold the wavelets white with foam
 As round the isles they whirl ,
Here troubled by the bathing saints,
 And there like orient pearl
Look, scattered by the morning breeze
 What beds of blossoms lie,
And chaplets, cast upon the wave,
 Are dancing swiftly by
Hark to the wild-duck's merry call
 Amid the reeds at play :

Hark to the joyous mallard's note
 Responsive far away
My life in fair Ayodhya's town
 Was not so sweet to me
As gazing on this lovely flood
 That glorious hill and thee
Bathe in the gentle stream to her
 With friendly love repair
And pluck her lilies in thy play
 And twine them in thy hair
This mount with all its savage life
 Ayodhya's city deem
And on this beauteous river look
 As our own Sarju's stream
O Sita I am wild with joy
 So rare a lot is mine
Cheered by a duteous brother's care
 And loved with love like thine

THE RAPE OF SITA.



"Ravana, finding it in vain to hope to succeed without the aid of strata gem, took with him an assistant sorcerer, disguised as a deer, and as Rama took great pleasure in the chase, it was not difficult for the deer to lure him from his cottage in pursuit. He did not leave his beloved Sita without charging Lakshman, his brother, to remain in charge, but the wily deer knew how to defeat his precaution, and when transfixed by Rama's arrow he cried out in the voice of Rama, "Oh, Lakshman, save me!" Sita heard the cry, and entreated Lakshman to fly to his brother's rescue. He was unwilling to go, but yielded to her earnestness and she was left alone" Mrs. SPEIR, *Life in Ancient India*

As, when the sun and moon their empire leave,
 Black night descends upon the widowed eve,
 So Ravan, watching for the lovely prize
 His form concealed in roaming Brahman's guise—
 Drew near to Sita, in the cottage left,
 Far from her guardians, of all aid bereft

All life was hush'd, and as the fiend came near
No leaflet stirred the wind was still through fear
And his red eye held powerless to flee
The trembling waters of Godaver
Unholy guest in holy guise he came
Close to the side of Rama's mourning dame
Like a dark well with treacherous weeds o'ergrown
Like Saturn when his baleful rays are thrown
Upon the fairest star of all the sky
Thus the night-rover with his evil eye
Looked on the lonely lady as she wept
Within her leafy home. Awhile he kept
His gaze upon her beauty for it fed
Upon the splendour of white teeth the red
Of luscious lips, the light of eyes that through
Their long soft lashes moistened with the dew
Of weeping glorified a face fair browed
Pure as the moon shining without a cloud

Then Ravan cried pierced by Love's fiery dart
Speak marvellous beauty tell me who thou art

All lonely here, in silken robes arrayed,
Wearing a lotus wreath thy brows to shade
What heavenly being do mine eyes behold,
Fairer and brighter than the finest gold ?
Fame? Beauty? Modesty? No less I ween,
Or sweet Desire, young Love's voluptuous queen ?
Red are thy lips, thy teeth are small and white,
Thy tender eyes are large and soft and bright
No child of earth could wear a smile so sweet,
And O, the wonder of thy perfect feet !
Robes cannot hide the glories of thy breast,
And fancy faintly pictures all the rest
Sweet Queen, these eyes have never seen till now
Sylph, nymph, or Goddess half so fair as thou
This savage wood befits thee, lady, ill,
Where wild fiends roam, changing their form at will
On some smooth terrace should thy couch be spread,
In gardens sweet with blooms thy feet should tread
A royal robe thy peerless form should deck,
And priceless gems sparkle upon thy neck
The choicest wreath should bind thy glorious hair,
A matchless lord thy bed of love should share

Who art thou Goddess? but no heavenly maid
Loves this wild wood beneath this gloomy shade
No nymph or gentle spirit seeks to roam
This is the giant's haunt the lion's home
Dost thou not dread so delicate and fair
The tiger near thee and the wolf and bear?
Whose and who art thou? Tell me, whence and why
Thou comest hither with no guardian nigh

He ceased The lady by his garb beguiled
With fearless innocence looked up and smiled.
She bade the seeming Brahman to a seat
And gave him water for his weary feet
And still intent on hospitable care
Brought forth the choicest of her woodland fare
She by the cottage-door expecting stood
To see her lord returning through the wood
But naught save boundless trees her gazes met
Rama and Lakshman lingering came not yet.
And then she told him what he sought to know
Her name her lineage all her weal and woe

The Monarch's promise, and Kaikeyi's hate,
The fatal oath, and grief that came too late.
'And now,' she said, 'declare thy name and race,
'And why thou roamest to this lonely place'

. She spoke The stranger thundered in reply .
'Terror of men and Gods and worlds am I,
Ravan, whose will the gaint hosts obey
Since I have seen thee, lovely one, to-day,
Clad in silk raiment, bright as polisht gold,
My love for all my wives is dead and cold
Though countless dames of perfect beauty, torn
From many a pillaged realm, my home adorn,
Come, fairest, come, my queen and darling be
Among a thousand I will love but thee
My city Lanka like a glittering crown
Looks from the high brow of a mountain down
On restless Ocean, who with flash and foam
Beats in wild rage against mine island-home
There pleasant gardens, shall thy steps invite
With me to wandér when the moon is bright ,

There in new joys thy breast shall ne'er retain
One faint remembrance of this place of pain

Then from her breast the noble fury broke
With flashing eye and quivering lip she spoke —
'Me me the faithful wife of Rama him
Before whose glory Indra's fame is dim
Rama, who quails not in the battle shock
Fierce as the Ocean, stedfast as the rock
Rama, the lord of each auspicious sign
Rama, the glory of his princely line
Me Rama's wife the dear fond wife of him
Him of the eagle eye the lordly limb—
Me dost thou dare with words of love to press
A jackal suing to a lioness?
As far above thine impious reach am I
As yonder sun that blazes in the sky
Ha thou hast seen those air-drawn trees of gold
That sign of doom which dying eyes behold
If thou hast ventured weary of thy life
To look with eyes of love on Rama's wife

Fool ! thou hadst better strive to rend away
The serpent's venom'd fang, the lion's prey ;
To steal the Blessed Tree that blooms on high,
To drink fell poison and not fear to die
Fool ! with a needle's point thine eye to prick ;
Fool ! with thy tongue a razor's edge to lick
Thou, tempt the wife of Rama ! Better leap,
A millstone round thy neck, from Lanka's steep
Into the raging sea and strive to swim
From shore to shore than tempt the wife of him
Thou, win his wife ! With lighter labour try
To pluck the sun and moon from yonder sky ,
Safer to wrap within thy robe the flame
Than woo to folly Rama's faithful dame
As the vast ocean to a trickling rill,
As Meru's mountain to the meanest hill ,
The Feathered Monarch to the skulking bat,
The lordly lion to the crawling cat
As sandal perfume to the common mire ,
As gold found perfect by the testing fire
To homely iron and dull lumps of lead
As the gay peacock, with his plumes outspread,

To the shy moping solitary owl
As the proud swan is to the meanest fowl
That dips his wings unnoticed in the sea —
So is my Rama to a thing like thee

Out burst the giant, with a furious frown
Hast thou not heard of Ravana's high renown?
Ne'er heard the glory and the might of me
Before whose face celestial armies flee?
Whom all the Gods with Indra at their head
Fear like the ruthless Monarch of the Dead
Before whose eye the sun and moon grow pale
And silent horror checks the shuddering gale
That every leaflet on the tree is still
Husht every ripple of the babbling rill.
Beyond the sea my glorious city stands
Lanka the famous raised by giant hands
Like Indra's city beautiful and bright
With golden walls and gates of lazulite
There every flower of rarest odour blows
And luscious fruit on loaded branches glows

There is the sound of cymbal and of drum
Tarry not, Sita, but arise and come '
Come, and with me all earthly pleasures share ;
Nay, heavenly joys, my love, shall bless thee there '

He ceased , and, changing all his gentle guise,
Stood before Sita in his native size,
A monstrous giant, terrible in form,
Dark as a thunder-cloud that leads the storm
Ten-faced and twenty-armed, in every head
Glared the wild eyeballs that his rage made red,
As with a scowl upon each haughty brow,
He cried . ' Fair Sita, wilt thou scorn me now ?
Lift thy sweet eyes, dear child of earth, and see
A husband worthy of a queen like thee.'
One eager hand her glorious tresses graspt,
One mighty arm around her waist was claspt
And hei, ye Spirits ! Ah, all wild with dread
Each nymph and faun before the fiend had fled
Where, where is Rama ? Rama roams afar,
And Ravan bears hei to his magic car

With angry threats the giant tried to still
Her cries for aid but very long and shrill
Rang forth her lamentation through the air
As of one raving in her great despair
Help Rama, help ! O Lakshman where art thou ?
Why faithful champion art thou heedless now ?
My hero wont the giants pride to tame
Tear from their impious hands thy brother's dame !
She who drove Rama from his promised throne
Will doubly triumph when this deed is known
Ye happy bowers ye bloomy groves farewell !
My mournful fate to royal Rama tell !
And thou Godaven dear stream upon
Whose bosom float the mallard and the swan
Forget not her who loves thee but relate
To royal Rama Sita's mournful fate
Ye gentle fauns to whom this wood is dear
Let Rama from your airy voices hear
That Ravan tears me hence ! On you on all
The countless life within these shades I call
Say that the fiend has borne away his wife
His own true Sita dearer than his life ,

He will regain the spouse he loves so well,
Yea, if they bore her to the depths of Hell'

Down to her feet her loosened tresses hung,
As, like a creeper, with twined arms she clung
To bough and branch, and falling on her knees
Shrunk out for succour to the mighty trees
Then Ravan's giant hand, unused to spare,
Seized her again by her long flowing hair
Vengeance on thee that cursed touch shall bring,
And stain with gore thy hair, thou impious King
All nature trembled, faint and sick with dread,
And sudden darkness o'er the world was spread,
The wind was hushed, dimmed was the glorious sun,
An awful voice that cried, 'The deed is done,
Burst from the mighty Sire, whose sleepless eye
Saw the fell outrage from his throne on high,
And the pure saints, with mingled joy and awe,
Looked on the sinner and his doom foresaw
In vain she struggled, as the giant threw
His arm around her waist and upward flew

With yellow robes far floating uncontrolled
And fair limbs glowing like the burnisht gold
The royal lady like the lightning shone
Too dazzling lovely to be looked upon
Touched by the glorious light the giant's frame
Showed like a mountain belted round with flame
And from the lotus wreath that crowned her head
Light falling petals on his limbs were shed
Widowed of Rama and of joy her face
Peered in its lovely sadness from the embrace
Of her fell ravisher So looks the moon
With pure light cleaving a dark cloud in June

RAMA'S DESPAIR.



Rama returns to his cottage and finds it empty Sita, his love, his life, is gone He had borne the loss of father, mother, home, and friends, but beneath this shock the hero's reason gives way.

Then Rama turning, with love-quicken'd pace,
 Eager to look upon his Sita's face,
 Came to his dwelling But he found her not ,
 Lonely and empty was the leafy cot,
 Like a sad streamlet in the winter's frost
 With all the glory of its lilies lost
 He searcht, he called no answering voice was heard,
 But a faint shudder that the branches stirred ,
 And sad with woe each tree and bird and flower
 Mourn'd round the ruin of the lady's bower ,

And nymph and faun in shady 'hickets sighed

And Rama lifted up his voice and cried
Where is my darling? Dead or torn away?
Or has she ventured in the wood to stray
Gathering flowers farther and farther still?
Or has she sought the stream her jar to fill?
Through grove and glade he ran with maddened brain
Seeking her wildly where all search was vain
From brook to brook from hill to hill he ran
Each tree to question and each lawn to scan
Tell me Acacia, has that fairest she
Who loved thy flowers so well been seen by thee?
Clad in pale silk and like thy clusters fair
If thou hast seen my darling tell me where!
Thou Bel tree laden with thy golden fruit
Round as my lady's breast, why art thou mute?
Where is she Heartsease? 'Tis thy gentle part
To banish woe come give me what thou art
Thou Cassia brilliant with thy pendent gold
Tell me what shades my radiant Sita hold

Palm, Mango, Jasmine, Amaranth, declare,
Where is my darling with the long soft hair ?
It may be that my fawn-eyed love has strayed
To sport with fawns beneath some arching shade.
I see thee dearest come, no longer seek
To hide thee in the grove, come forth or speak !
I see thee, lady of the lotus eye,
Thou art not hidden, and 'tis vain to fly.
Stay if thou lovest me, my Sita, stay !
Too much already of this cruel play
I see thy garment shimmer in the brake
Stay, my sweet darling, for dear pity's sake !

Ah ! she is dead, her mangled limbs the feast
Of wandering giant or some ravenous beast,
That moon-bright cheek, that pure and polished brow,
Red lips and dazzling teeth what are they now ?
Tossing her arms her spray-soft arms in vain,
Shrieking for help, alas ! my love was slain.
Why wast thou left within thy bower alone,
For fiends to rend thee, oh, mine own, mine own ?

My Sita lost I will not live but go
 Hence to the after world weighed down by woe
 The mighty King our sire will see me there
 And sternly cry False perjured Rama where
 Where is thy faith that thou with evil speed
 Comest from exile ere the time decreed ?
 Can I return from banishment to see
 Those chambers empty where my queen should be ?
 Can I return to hear my people cry
 Shame on the wretch who failed to save or die ?
 How can I meet Videlha's King and brook
 The speechless agony of the father's look ?
 How will these lips endure to tell him all ?
 These eyes to see him start and faint and fall ?
 Now leave me here to mourn awhile and die
 Do thou dear brother to Ayodhya hie
 The beautiful city, thus to Bharat say
 With tender greeting Rama bids thee sway
 The righteous sceptre thou deservest well
 Then after reverent salutation tell
 With soothing words my mother his and thine
 The mournful tale of Sita's fate and mine

SITA IN PRISON.



As some poor solitary deer,
 When eager dogs are pressing near,
 Lies sobbing in an alien wood
 Far from her soft-eyed sisterhood,
 So in King Ravan's hall, a prey
 To fear and anguish, Sita lay
 With none to aid her in distress,
 Cirt round by many a giantess

Pierced by the shaft of Love, the King
 Strode to the centre of the ring
 He bade the captive lady rise,
 And, lifting up her streaming eyes,
 View all the glorious house that vied
 With heavenly homes in pomp and pride

Hall bower and chamber bright with throngs
Of gay robed dames and cheered with songs
Of countless birds whose swelling throats
Blent sweetly their delicious notes
From gold and crystal pillars bright
With studs of pearl and lazulite
Near lay a royal garden fair
With terrace lawn and gay parterre
Where roses glowed and peacocks played
Delighted in the Mango s shade
Like cloudy pile in skies of June
That hides the path of sun and moon
Or soaring up like Meru s head
All flaming with the morning s red
So vast so high that palace raised
Sky-cleaving pinnacles and blazed
In the sun s path from floor to spire
A hape of beauty clothed in fire

He led her up the stair whereon
Inlaid in gold large diamonds shone

And to her eyes that marked not showed
The glory of his rich abode
The lattice with its ivory frame,
Where softened light through silver came ,
And curtains, bound with golden braid,
Cast on the floor a rosy shade
The car, obedient to his will,
That bore him over flood and hill
Long galleries and stately halls
Where pictures lived upon the walls
The mazy rill that murmured round
The grotto and the pleasure-mound
Pools where the lily flushed, the lake
Where played the cygnet and the drake
Thus with delight, from view to view,
The undelighted dame he drew,
And, as she trembled by his side,
' Look, Sita ' at each step he cried
' Now, fair one, learn my power and might
Ten million Rovers of the Night,
And lesser fiends, a countless band,
Millions of millions, round me stand,

Who joy in fight and scorn to fly
Of all this host sole lord am I
Whose army is so vast and bold ?
What king so rich in gems and gold ?
What earthly city can compare
With Lanka fairest of the fair ?
To thy sweet hand I yield the whole
O dearer than my life and soul
Thousands of women wait my sign
O large-eyed be their queen and mine
My earnest prayer no longer spurn
For Love's hot fires within me burn
Sea-girt three hundred leagues in length
My Lanka lies and if the strength
Of heavenly hosts her walls assail
Though Indra lead their might would fail
No spirit of the earth or air
No God can with my strength compare
No longer let thy fancy dwell
On Rama in his hermit cell
Leave the poor mortal to his fate
And wed thee with a worthier mate

Thy youth will not for ever stay,
Come, use it ere it glide away.
Nor let vain hopes thy breast beguile
Of rescue from the Giants' isle
Less vain the toil that sought to tame
The glory of the quenchless flame
Less vain the toil that strove to bind
The gale that wanders swift as inind
Man, fiend, or God would find it hard
To rescue thee whom I would guard
Spurn not, fair Queen, a realm like this,
But dwell with me and reign in bliss
Thy hermit life has washed away
What stain upon thy bright soul lay .
Now come, with me enjoy the meed
Of each high thought and noble deed
What ' still reluctant, cold, and coy,
Still loving grief and hating joy '
Hear, lady of the faultless brow,
Ravan ne'er stooped so low till now
Down at thy perfect feet I kneel,
And pity beg for all I feel .

My head beneath thy feet I crave
Some mercy for thy loving slave

My large-eyed Rama dear to fame
Of mighty arm and lion frame
And Lakshman, will not tarry long
But slay thee though thy walls are strong
Soon will he hurry on thy track
And with thy life take Sita back.
Small aid gainst him thy hosts will bring
Like snakes seized by the Feathered King
Though they be terrible and fierce
The arrows from his bow will pierce
Thy body through from flank to flank
As Ganga rends away the bank
Though girt by hosts of demon shape
Thou canst not from his hand escape
Thou when he holds thee with his eye
Scorcht with his shafts shalt fall and die
He who can dry the mighty deep
May bid poor Sita moan and weep

But the great sun shall cease to shine
Ere her pure soul to sin incline
Repent, ere yet it be too late,
The crime thy death shall expiate,
Or soon shall seas of blood be spilt,
And widowed Lanka mourn thy guilt
When Rama's shaft has laid thee low,
Far other words thy tongue shall know .
Thou scarcely then wilt boast in pride
That thou hast torn me from his side
He comes, and 'neath his anger all,
Thyself, thy host, thy town shall fall.
I spurn thee. can the altar dight
With vessels for the sacred rite,
O'er which the priest his prayer has said,
Be sullied by an outcast's tread ?
My body lies within thy power .
Torture it, chain it, kill, devour ,
Ne'er will I meet thy base desire,
Or lay mine honour in the mire'

With looks of fury Ravan cried, ,

Come Ogresses and tame her pride
He spoke and quicker than the word
The coming of the fiends was heard
Shuddered the air as on they sped
And the earth shook beneath their tread
Before their lord they humbly bowed
And pressed round Sita in a crowd
To the Asoka garden bear
My prize he cried and guard her there
Until her stubborn pride be bent
By mingled threat and blandishment
See that ye watch her well and tame
Like some wild thing the haughty dame
They bore her to that garden bright
With every flower that charms the sight
Where sweet streams under branches flowed
And fruit through all the seasons glowed
Prostrate before those fiendish eyes
Like a poor trembling deer that lies
Beneath a tiger's paw she lay
Thinking of Rama far away

RAMA IN THE SPRING



“ I sought thee there,

And, mourning for my darling, scarce could bear
The sweet cool smell of lakes and pleasant showers,
The beauty and the perfume of the flowers,
And all delights of sight, and sound, and smell,
For, without Sita, Heaven itself were Hell ”

KALIDASA.

‘ Look, brother, at that grove,’ he cried,
‘ That lines sweet Pampa’s shelving side
Those trees of giant girth that rear
Their heads so high, like hills appear
These are the pleasant days that fire
The youthful bosom with desire ,

When soft winds breathing balm dispense
Wood odours that enthrall the sense
And pour a ceaseless rain of flowers
As drops the cloud his summer showers
Look even as I speak my head
Is covered with the blooms they shed
How soft the west wind moves along
To music of the wild bee's song,
His breath is of the woodland spring
The sandal's odour lades his wing
Look up there hardly glimmers through
These arching trees one speck of blue
Look there the Cassia's bloom behold
A giant clad in burning gold.
O happy spring whom birds rejoice
To welcome with their gladdest voice!
O happy time but not to me
For I am wandering far from thee,
My darling of the large soft eye
That Koil with his loud shrill cry
Of joy and freedom and desire
That the first days of spring inspire

Seems calling, as he cheers his mate,
To me all lone and desolate '
See, where the joyous mallard leads
His partner through that fringe of reeds
Each happy bird, as I none alone,
Hails the spring air with gladdest tone,
All revelling in bliss alike,
The swan, the hawk, the dove, the shrike
Look, brother, in that shady glen
The peacock dances round his hen .
No giant's hand has reft away
The mate with whom he loves to play
There, round the Mango blossom, press
Wild bees, with lovers' eagerness
But Ah ! the blissful life around,
Each lovely sight, each pleasant sound,
Pierces my very heart, and slays
With memory of perisht days,
That flew in heavenly rapture by
With Sita of the roc-deer's eye "

' 1 "Thou 'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird
That sings beside thy mate" BURNS

TIDINGS OF SITA

As on the breezy hill I stood
 That rises o'er the pathless wood
 High o'er me flew a monstrous form
 Dark as the cloud that heralds storm
 I saw the giant's flashing eye
 I heard a woman's piteous cry
 A voice from out the still air came
 Of weeping mixt with Rama's name
 A dove whom eagle talons grasp
 She struggled in the giant's clasp
 I heard again a wilder shriek
 She saw me on the mountain peak

An anklet from her foot she drew,
And with it cast her garland too
The token I have guarded well
Some tidings of thy love may tell'

Quick to the mountain cave he went,
And brought the treasured ornament
Then burst the tear from Rama's eyes,
As, gazing on the well-known prize,
'O Sita, O my love!' he said,
Then swooned and fell as fall the dead

RAVAN'S PALACE

Hanuman the son of the Wind God and the ally of Rama, enters Lanka by night in search of Sita. There he sees Pushpaka, the magic car which contains the palace of the King of the Giants.

Then sweetly to his ear were borne
 The blended notes of drum and horn
 Cymbal and tabour deep and loud
 Like thunder from a distant cloud
 Awhile he stood then nearer drew
 Till flash'd upon his startled view
 The car of Ravan long and wide
 A measured league from side to side
 The car that flew o'er flood and lull
 Obedient to the master's will.

Its jewelled arches high o'erhead
An ever-changing lustre shed
From ruby, pearl, and every gem,
On golden pillars under them
Delicious came the tempered air
That breathed a heavenly summer there,
Stealing through bloomy trees that bore
Each pleasant fruit in endless store
Enclosed within that pearly bound,
The wondering chief a palace found,
Of vast extent and stately height
With doors of gold and lazulite,
And deckt with every lovely thing,
The mansion of the Giant King
No check was there from jealous guard,
No door was fast, no portal barred,
Only a sweet air breathed to meet
The stranger, as a host should greet
A wanderer of his kith and kin,
And woo his weary steps within
He stood within a spacious hall
With fretted roof and painted wall,

The grant Ravan's boast and pride
 Loved even as a lovely bride
 I were long to tell each marvel there
 The crystal floor the jewelled stair
 The gold the silver and the shine
 Of chrysolite and almandine
 Here breathed the fairest blooms of spring
 Here flash'd the proud swan's silver wing
 The splendour of whose feathers broke
 Through fragrant wreaths of aloe smoke
 'Tis Indra's Heaven the chieftain cried
 Gazing in joy from side to side
 The home of all the Gods is this
 The mansion of eternal bliss!
 There were the softest carpets spread
 Delightful to the sight and tread
 Where troops of fairest women lay
 Overcome by sleep fatigued with play
 The cup no longer checked the feast
 The sound of revelry had ceased
 The tumb ling feet no longer stirred
 No clinking of a zone was heard

So when each bird has sought her nest,
And swans are mute and wild bees rest,
Sleep the fair lilies of the lake
Till the sun's kiss shall bid them wake
Like the calm field of autumn's sky
Which stars unnumbered glorify,
So shone the tyrant's sumptuous room
With living stars that chased the gloom
'These are the stars,' the chieftain cried,
'In summer nights that earthward glide ;
In brighter form they re appear
To shine in matchless lustre here,'

With wondering eyes awhile he viewed
Each graceful form and attitude
One lady's head was backward thrown,
Bare was her arm and loosed her zone.
The garland that her brow had graced
Hung closely round another's waist
Here gleamed two little feet, all bare
Of anklets that had sparkled there

Here lay a queenly dame at rest
In all her glorious garments drest.
There slept another whose small hand
Had loosened every tie and band
In careless grace another lay
With gems and jewels cast away
Like a young creeper when the tread
Of the wild elephant has spread
Destruction and confusion round
And hurled it flowerless to the ground
Here lay a slumberer still as death
Save only that her balmy breath
Raised ever and anon the lace
That floated o'er her sleeping face
There sunk in sleep an amorous maid
Her sweet head on a mirror laid
Like a fair lily bending till
Her petals float upon the rill.
Another black eyed damsel pressed
Her lute upon her heaving breast
As through her happy arms were twined
Round him for whom she long had pined.

Another pretty sleeper round
A silver vase her arms had wound,
That seemed so fresh and fair and young
A wreath of flowers that o'er it hung

In sweet disorder lay a throng
Weary of dance and play and song
Where heedless girls had sunk to rest,
One pillowed on another's breast,
Her tender cheek scarce seen beneath
Red roses of the falling wreath,
The while her long soft hair concealed
The beauties that her friend revealed
With limbs at random interlaced
Round arm and leg and throat and waist,
That wreath of women lay asleep
Like blossoms in a careless heap

KUMBIHAKARNA



Kumbhakarna the gigantic brother of the titan Ravana—named from the size of his ears which could contain Kumbha or large water-jars—had an appetite that led him to consume all the provisions in a day. He begged of Brahma to relieve the alarm of the world which had been a constant source of anxious apprehensions of being exterminated, that the great god should give him six months at a time and work for only a day. The god granted his request, and in six months all went well without the payment of the requested tribute. When Rama invaded the island of Ceylon, the request was renewed, and all the forces employed to meet him were defeated—eventually with success—the work of the gigantic.



With troubled spirit and with broken pride
Through Lanka's gate the vanquished Pavan fled
Crushed like an elephant who falls beneath
The lion's spring and feeds the murderous teeth
Or like a serpent beneath the furious sun,
And vengeful talons of the Feathered King

Such was the giant's fear and wild alarm
At the swift arrows shot by Rama's arm
Shafts, with the flame of lightning round them curled,
Like Brahma's fiery bolts that end the world.
At length, supported on his golden throne,
With failing eye he spoke and humbled tone :
'Alas ! ye Giants, all the toil is vain,
Fruitless my penance and an age of pain,
If I, whom India's self confest his peer,
Secure from Gods, a mortal victor fear.
My soul remembers—now, alas ! too late
The words of Brahma which foretold my fate -
'Tremble, proud Giant,' thus the warning ran,
'And fear destruction from unheeded man.
Secure from God and fiend and angel, live,
From faun and serpent, by the boon I give.
Against their power and might thy life is charmed,
Against man only is thy soul unarmed '
Too well I know the fated hour is nigh :
Then let each leader to his station fly.
Guard every alley with a chosen band,
Let giant warders on the rampart stand,

And let the terror of immortal eyes
Great Kumbhakarna from his trance arise
He in deep slumber free from care and pain
Lulled by a charm for many a month has lain
Let him arise our bravest best of all
And soon the foemen neath his arm will fall
The giant hosts their monarch's word obeyed
And left his presence trembling and afraid
They carried flowery garlands sweet and fresh
And for his banquet, loads of blood and flesh
They reacht the cavern where the slumberer lay—
A mighty cave that stretcht a league each way
But scarce the strongest could an entrance gain
So fierce the tempest as he breathed again
They found the giant lying on his bed
With his huge limbs at all their length outspread
Before his face they piled his favorite cheer
The flesh of buffaloes and boars and deer
With garlands heavenly fair they fanned his face
And clouds of incense sweetened all the place
Then moon bright conchs they sounded loud and long
And the cave echoed with the giant's song

Then on their breasts they smote with thundering blows,
And higher yet the wild commotion rose,
When the loud cymbal vied with drum and horn,
And fiendish war-cries on the gale upborne
Through all the air in hideous discord spread,
And the birds heard the din and fell down dead
But Kumbhakarna calmly took his rest
And they smote fiercely on his shaggy chest
With maces, clubs, and pieces of the rock,
But still he moved not yet nor felt the shock
Then all united in one effort more
With shell, drum, tabor, and redoubled roar ,
Club, mace, staff, mallet, with strong arms applied,
Rained vigorous blows upon his breast and side ,
And screaming elephants were urged to aid,
And beaten camels groaned and horses neighed
But Kumbhakarna calmly slumbered still
Then furious wrath began their breasts to fill
They drencht his forehead with a hundred pails,
They toré his ears and hair with teeth and nails ,
They bound together many a murderous mace,
And beat him wildly on the head and face,

And drove wild elephants with ponderous tread
Over his mighty limbs and chest and head
The unusual weight the giant's slumber broke
He shook his sides and started and awoke
And all regardless of the wounds and blows
Yawning with thirst and faint with hunger rose
His jaws like hell gaped terrible and wide
Red as the sun when glaring over the side
Of Meru Every burning breath he drew
Roared like a mighty wind that rushes through
The cedars on the mountain Up he raised
His horselike head with eyes that fiercely blazed
Like comets horrible as Death in form
When menacing the worlds with fire and storm
The giants pointed to the reeking store
Of flesh of buffalo and deer and boar
And the fiend gorged him with the flesh and blood
Huge jars of marrow and of wine a flood
He ended and the giants ventured near
And bent their heads in reverence and fear
And Kumbhakarna looked around with eyes
All glazed and heavy in their first surprise

And drowsy yet from his late troubled rest
He thus the Rovers of the Night address
‘ Why have ye called me from my sleep to wake ?
None with light cause my rest should dare to break
Say, is it well with Ravan ? Or has need
And fear come on ye, that with heedless speed
Ye thus disturb me ? Mark the words I say,
The giants’ King shall tremble in dismay,
The fire be quencht and Indra’s self be slain,
Ere he shall rouse me from my sleep in vain ’
The wise Yupaksha humbly thus replied
‘ No fiend has dared us, and no God defied
But gathered men our golden walls assail,
And fear is on us lest then might prevail
For Rama leads them to the deadly strife,
Burning for vengeance for his ravisht wife
The hostile flame through Lanka’s town is red,
And Ravan weeps his best and dearest dead
Nay, e’en our King who never trembled yet
For heavenly hosts or fiends in battle met,
Himself at last the general dread has shared,
By Rama vanquisht and by Rama spared ’

Then Kumbhakarna thus in answer spake

I will go forth and deadly vengeance take

And tread their armies neth my conquering feet

Then flusht with victory the King will meet

The princes blood shall be my special draught

By you the gore of all the host be quaffed

THE OMENS.



Fierce as he who rules the dead,
Ravan forth to battle sped ,
Chieftains of his giant band
Followed close on either hand
Scarce the city gates were past
When the sun was overcast
Darkness fell on all around,
Roared the clouds and shook the ground.
Startled coursers fled amain
Mid a shower of bloody rain
Vultures, with ill-omened wing,
Smote the banner of the King

While the jackal's hungry cry
Echoed as the car flew by
Throbbing eye and aching arm
Struck him with a wild alarm
Pallor sat upon his cheek
And his voice grew low and weak
Terrible with flash and flame
Down a hissing meteor came
Birds that haunt the carnage field
Round the head of Ravan wheeled
While his steeds as on they swept
To the brunt of battle wept.
Still the maddened King in spite
Of the omens rushed to fight
Still by Yama hand impelled
Toward his fate his course he held
Earth beneath his chariot shook
Hill and forest cave and brook

RAVAN DEAD.



Soon as they saw their leader dead,
 The giants turned and broke and fled ;
 Some to the hill, the wood, the cave,
 Some leapt into the ocean wave
 Some sad for wife and children's fate
 Ran to their home through Lanka's gate
 Poor welcome there in weeping eyes,
 The groans of age, and children's cries
 Behind the routed, fierce and strong
 As lions prest the victor throng
 From street to street in quest they strayed,
 And all the marvels there surveyed
 Eight gates that blazed with gems and gold,
 Eight walls that girt the giant's hold ;

And domes and spires that flasht on high
Like sun shot clouds in autumn's sky

Vibhisban with a brother's grief
Wept o'er the body of the chief
O hero bold and brave ! he cried
Skilled in all arms in battle tried !
Spoiled of thy crown with limbs outspread,
Why wilt thou press this gory bed ?
Why sleep upon the earth's cold breast
When silken couches woo to rest ?
Ah me my brother ! over bold
Thine is the fate my heart foretold
But love and pride forbade to hear
The friend who blamed thy wild career
Fallen is our sun that shone so bright
Our lordly moon is veiled in night
Our beacon fire is dead and cold
A hundred waves have o'er it rolled
What could his light and fire avail
Against Lord Rama's arrowy hail ?

Woe for the giants' royal tree,
 Whose stately height was fair to see '
 His buds were deeds of kingly grace ,
 His bloom, the sons who deckt his race.
 His penance was the glorious fruit,
 And his own noble soul the root.
 With rifled bloom and mangled bough
 The royal tree lies prostrate now ' '

' Nay, idly mourn not,' Rama cried,
 ' The warrior chief has nobly died
 Intrepid hero, firm through all,
 So fell he as the brave should fall ,
 And ill beseems it men like us
 To weep for those who perish thus
 Be firm thy causeless grief restrain,
 And pay the dues that yēt remain '

Again the sad Vibhishan spoke .
 ' His was the hero's arm that broke
 Embattled Gods and Indra's might,
 Unconquered ere to-day in fight

He rushed against thee strove, and fell
 As Ocean when his waters swell
 Hurling his might against the rock
 Falls spent and shattered by the shock
 Woe for our chief's untimely end
 The generous lord the trusty friend !
 The cup of bliss he loved to drain
 And wealth upon his friends to rain
 Our sure defence when fear arose
 A bitter scourge to stubborn foes
 In Holy Scripture deeply read
 The sacred flame he duly fed
 Of ready hand of fearless heart,
 In sternest penance bore his part.
 O let the foe thy hand has slain
 The honours of the dead obtain
 Then Rama answered Hatred dies
 When low in dust the foeman lies
 Now triumph bids our contest cease
 And knits us in the bonds of peace
 Let funeral rites be duly paid
 And be it mine thy toil to aid.

SITA DISGRACED.



With her sweet eyehds wet with tears of shame,
 Unveiled before so many, Sita came
 And met her long-lost husband face to face
 And Rama gazed upon her winning grace
 With eyes that longed to weep, but, mute and still,
 He stayed their fountains with his iron will
 No word was spoken, for a double tide
 Surged in his changing bosom, love and pride
 No word for her who stood before her king
 In shame and anguish like a guilty thing
 No word of greeting for his rescued dame
 On whose bright soul ne'er lay a shade of blame .
 Whom giant hands from her dear home had torn,
 And kept a hopeless captive, sorrow-worn ,

For Rama's sake still living through her pain
And now returning as from Death's domain

Once only once she lifted up her eye
Once called upon him with a bitter cry
Then from rude eyes the tears began to flow
And warriors melted at the lady's woe
Scarce Lakshman's self the rising flood repress
And hid his face a moment in his vest
But Sita cast her causeless shame away
And her own virtue was her strength and stay
Conscious of truth that slandering tongues defied
Her sobs she checked her weeping eyes she dried
And struggling still with anger and surprise
Looked on her husband with unflinching eyes
Then Rama spoke O dame my task is done
The foe is slain and thou the spoil art won
Mine arm has conquered and mine honour freed
Has killed the robber and avenged the deed
Lord of myself loosed from the vows I swore
Duty and honour claim from me no more

The wondrous bridge that spanned the angry flood,
The Giants' city red with foemen's blood
The countless host by friendly warriors led,
The wise who counselled and the brave who bled
With hearts that sank not in the doubtful fray
This glorious toil has gained its crown to-day
But hearken, lady 'Twas no love for thee
That led my army o'er the angry sea
'Twas not for thee that streams of blood were shed,
And Lanka's streets piled high with giant dead
No fond affection for my captive wife
Impelled my arrow in the day of strife
I battled only to avenge the cause
Of injured honour and insulted laws
Thy name is blemisht, and the shameful doubt
Fills all my heart and drives affection out
No more thy beauty charms me 'Tis a light
Shed by a torch that pains the injured sight
Go where thou wilt I give thee leave to roam,
I lead no traitress to my royal home'

Then Sita spoke in accents soft and low,

Yet struggling with unutterable woe
Hast thou the heart O monarch to dismiss
A highborn lady with a speech like this ?
To banish thus the daughter of a king
Like some light damsel trained to dance and sing ?
By all the merit of my life I swear
I am not what thy hasty words declare
Doubt others faith but cast all doubt aside
Of one whose truth a life of love has tried
Round my weak form his arms the Giant thren
But all the blame to Fate and him is due
What could I do—a woman and alone ?
My heart was mine and that was still thine own
Gainst thee and honour have I wrought no sin
Pure is my body as my soul within
Or may the Gods my name and fame destroy
And bar my spirit from eternal joy
Dear Lakshman haste prepare the burning pile ,
I cannot live to bear a load so vile
There is no way but only this to gain
Freedom and rest and clear my life of stain

HOME.



The rest is thus briefly told in the Argument of the poem with which the First Book begins

Then Sita, touched with noble ire,
Gave her fair body to the fire
But straight the God of Wind appeared,
And words from heaven her honour cleared
And Rama clasped his faithful dame
Uninjured, pure from spot and blame,
Obedient to the Lord of Fire^s
And the high mandate of his sire
Led by the Lord who rules the sky,
The Gods and heavenly Saints drew nigh,
And honoured him with worthy meed,
Rejoicing in each glorious deed

His task achieved his foe removed
He triumphed by the Gods approved
By grace of Heaven he raised to life
The chieftains slain in mortal strife
Then in the magic chariot through
The clouds to Nandigrama flew
Met by his faithful brothers there
He loosed his votive coil of hair
Thence fair Ayodhya's town he gained
And o'er his father's kingdom reigned
Disease or famine ne'er opprest
His happy people richly blest
With all the joys of ample wealth
Of sweet content and perfect health
No widow mourned her well loved mate
No sire his son's untimely fate
They feared not storm or robber's hand
No fire or flood laid waste the land
The Golden Age seemed come again
To bless the days of Rama's reign



THE MESSENGER CLOUD

The subject of the poem is simple and ingenious—a Yaksha a divinity of an inferior order an attendant upon the god of riches Kuvera and one of a class which, as it appears from the poem is characterized by a benevolent spirit, a gentle temper and an affectionate disposition has incurred the displeasure of his sovereign and has been condemned by him to a twelve months exile from his home. In the solitary but sacred forest in which he spends the period of his banishment the Yaksha's most urgent care is to find an opportunity of conveying intelligence and consolation to his wife and in the wildness of his grief he fancies that he discovers a friendly messenger in a cloud—one of those noble masses which seem almost instinct with life as they traverse a tropical sky in the commencement of the Monsoon and move with slow and solemn progression from the equatorial ocean to the snows of the Himalaya. In the spirit of this bold but not unnatural personification the Yaksha addresses the Cloud and entrusts to it the message he yearns to despatch to the absent object of his attachment. He directs the direction in which the Cloud is to travel—one marked out for it indeed by the eternal laws of nature and takes this opportunity of alluding to the most important scene of Hindu mythology and tradition—the birth of the dulness of prosaic detail but with the true poetic pencil which by a few happy touches brings the subject of the description vividly before the reader's eye. Arrived at the end of the journey the condition of his beloved wife is the theme of the exiles pathetic patois and is dwelt upon with equal delicacy and truth and the poem terminates with the message that is intended to assuage her grief and animate her hopes. The whole of this part of the composition is distinguished by the graceful expression of natural and amiable feelings and cannot fail to leave a favourable impression of the national character.

H. H. WILSON

I

Dark are the shadows of the trees that wave
Their pendent branches upon Rama's Hill,¹
Veiling the stream where Sita loved to lave
Sweet limbs that hallowed as they touched the rill .
There a sad Spirit, whom his master's will,
Wroth for a service he had rendered ill,
An exile from his happy home had torn,
Was sternly doomed for twelve long months to mourn,
Of all his glories reft, of his dear love forlorn

II

Some weary days, intolerably slow,
The listless exile all alone had past
The bracelet clung not to the arm that woe
Had withered, and the weeping and the fast ,
When on a day of June he upward cast
His aching eyes, lo ! on the mountain lay
A glorious cloud embracing it, as vast
As some huge elephant that stoops in play
To trample down the bank that bars his onward way.

¹ Situated, it appears, a little to the north of Nagpore

III.

Once and again his wistful eyes he raised
Checking the tear-drop in her secret springs
And on the jasmine's sweet restorer gazed
The mournful servant of the King of Kings¹
Mournful for if the first seen rain-cloud brings
Trouble and doubt to him whose arms are prest
Around his love O judge what torture wrings
His bosom far from her he loves the best,
A prey to longing love and fear and wild unrest

IV

Then cheered by hope he culled each budding spray
And the last blooms that lingered in the brake,
And hastened humbly to the Cloud to pray
With offerings trusting for his darling's sake
While Welcome friendship's sweetest word he spake
That he would waft his message as a spell
Whence life and comfort the lone bride might take
That he would calm her troubled heart and tell
That were she only present all with him were well

¹ A title of Kuyera the God of Wealth

V.

Blame not the Spirit, if his wild despair
Urged his love-laden bosom to complain
To the dark child of vapour, sun, and air
Have ye ne'er learnt that hopeless love is fain
To shriek the lamentation wrung by pain
In nature's senseless ear - to weep and moan
To valley and to mountain, and to rain
Tears on the flowers and call on stock and stone
To suffer with his woe and echo groan for groan ?

VI

'O thou of ever-changing form,' he cried,
'I know thee, offspring of a glorious race,
The mighty counsellor close by the side
Of royal Indra is thine honoured place
By cruel fate torn from my love's embrace
I fly to thee for comfort in my woe
Better to sue and be denied the grace
By one of gentle blood whose worth we knew,
Than stoop to bear away rich guerdon from the low

VII

Dear friend of all whom flames of anguish burn
 If thou hast power and pity as of old
 On me on me thy tender glances turn
 Who mourn the anger of the God of Gold
 Lo distant Alaka fly uncontrolled
 Where dwell my brethren in their stately halls
 There let my message to my love be told
 Mid gilded palaces and marble walls
 On which the silver light of Siva's crescent¹ falls

VIII

There wilt thou see the melancholy bride
 Of me thy brother thin and ghastly pale
 Her only care—for every joy has died—
 To count the dark days slowly lengthening tale
 She lingers yet for woman's heart, though frail
 As the fair flower that nipt by winter's chill
 Bends her sweet head before the rude rough gale
 If hope be left her in her misery still
 Clings fondly to the life despair alone can kill

¹ The crest of Siva: the n w m n a d h Himalaya mountain mid which Al k is situ t d rē his favourite haunt

IX

Hence as thou mountest up, each lonely wife,
Tossing her tresses from her brow in glee
And drinking from the sight rapture and life,
Thy rapid course through realms of air shall see,
And whisper blessings as she looks on thee
For who at such a warning would not brave-
Danger and death, and to his darling flee,
Save the sad captive in his fetters, save
A prisoned wretch like me, a tyrant's helpless slave !

X

As favouring gales thy airy course impel,
The tuneful Ram-birds shall thy way attend ,
A pomp of wreathing cranes thy state shall swell,
On silver pinions rustling round their friend ,
From many a stream shall lordly swans ascend,
When the glad thunder of thy voice they hear,
And wild with joy their eager course shall bend
To Manas' mountain lake, still following near
Till high Kailasa's peaks, thy journey's end, appear

XL

Now with one brief adieu one last embrace
Turn from this steep thine ancient friend away
Where Rama's blessed feet once left their trace
Though his hot tears will mourn thy shortened stay
Yet ere the message of my love I say
Hear the long journey mark each place of rest
Where thou wilt fain with weary wings delay
To gather strength upon some mountain crest
Or drink exhausted from some gentle river's breast

XII

Quick from this mountain moist with verdure rise
And turn thee northward in thy lofty flight
The nymphs of air with eager upturned eyes
Shall look on thee in wonder and delight
And deem some hill rent from the mountain height
Rides on the furious blast Then sad with shame
The warden elephants whose peerless might
Upholds the world shall mourn their vanish'd fame
And far surpass by thee renounce their ancient claim

XIII.

Then steering east, yon glorious gems that blend
Then light and shade in Indra's heavenly bow'¹
To thy dark ground a softened light shall lend,
And make thee glorious with a borrowed glow ,
As the gay splendours of the peacock throw
New beauty, round the youthful Krishna spread
Then to the plains of fruitful Mala go
Whose bright-eyed maids, with fond looks upward sped,
Shall bless then bounteous friend slow sailing overhead

XIV

Thence northward speeding, with a lighter course,
Turn to the west, and, floating downward, seek,
A pleasant shelter to recruit thy force,
The shady summits of the Mango Peak
He will relieve thee travel-worn and weak ,
Thy timely aid that oft has quencht the flame
That burnt his trees will in thy favour speak
Friendship's sweet debt not e'en the base disclaim,

¹ The rainbow

And far from noble souls be such disgrace and shame!

21

When thy dark glory rests above the gold
Of fruit and green of boughs that wave around
The maids of Heaven with rapture shall behold
New beauty stealing o'er the summit, crowned
As with the tresses of a woman bound
Upon her fair head as a diadem.
And the bright mountain swelling from the ground
Like the full breast of Earth shall ravish them
When thou dark Cloud art there that bosom's bud and gem

XVI

If worn and weary with the lengthening way

[illegible]

The famous hill of Chitrakuta¹ woos
Thy friendly presence for awhile to stay ,
There, as the grateful rest thy strength renews,
Do not, for pity, gentle Cloud, refuse
To soothe his burning heat with thy soft rain
Sweet mercy, watered with the kindly dews
Of virtue, is a seed ne'er sown in vain
Soon will the generous act its worthy fruit obtain

XVII

Linger an hour, then, launching lightly forth,
Leave the dark glades which Wood-nymphs wander o'er
Pursue thine any journey to the north
With pinions swifter for thy nimble store
Soon over Vindhya's mountains wilt thou soar,
And Reva's rippling stream whose waters glide
Beneath their feet, without their rush and roar,
In many a rock-barred channel, summer-dried,
Like lines of paint that deck an elephant's huge side

¹ "The mountain here mentioned must be in the vicinity of Omerkuntak, and part of the same range the name signifies, "the variegated or wonderful peak," and is applied to a number of hills the most famous hill of this name is situated in Bundelkund H H WILSON

XVIII

Here where the air is heavy with the scent
Of elephants that roam along the rill
From the fair stream restore thy treasures spent
In travel and thy wasted bosom fill
Lest the rude wind drive thee about at will
To cheer thy way each bud shall lovelier grow
And fragrant jasmine be more fragrant still
The burning woods waft odours from below
And clear toned birds delight thy onward path to show

XIX

Each Sylph shall watch thee with observant eyes
And mark the Rain birds eager for the run
Flocking to meet thee from the distant skies
Then he will count in ever lengthening chain
Mounting from fen and field crane after crane
And when thy voice of thunder loud and clear
Proclaims thee nigh to his fond breast will strain
His darling mingling with each kiss a tear
Drawn from his happy eyes by love's unreasoning fear

XX

Ah me ! in vain, mid lovely scenes like those,
I bid my friendly messenger be fleet ,
Will not each mountain woo thee to repose
Where wild woods murmur and the flowers are sweet ?
Will not the peacock, as he turns to greet
Thy coming with love-beaming eye, prevail ?
Will not his tender looks my hopes defeat ?
With too successful blandishment assail
Thy yielding heart, and cause thy promised truth to fail ?

XXI

On, on, my herald ' as thou sailest nigh,
A green of richer glory will invest
Dasarna's groves where the pale leaf is dry
There shall the swans awhile their pinions rest
Then the Rose-apple, in full beauty diest,
Shall show her fruit , then shall the crane prepare,
Warned of the coming rain, to build her nest,
And many a tender spray shall rudely tear
From the old village tree, the peasants' sacred care.

XXII

But rest not yet thy steady course pursue
 And a town foremost on the rolls of fame
 Vidisa¹ seat of kings will charm thy view
 And bless thee far above thy fondest aim
 Where Vetravati like an amorous dame
 With arching brows her rippling waves will show
 And with each winning art thy love will claim
 Enslaving thee with the melodious flow
 Of streams that kiss the bank murmuring soft and low

XXIII

Hence to a lowlier hill direct thy flight
 And for a moment on its crest descend
 Thy touch its faint Kadambas shall delight
 And through each spray new life and rapture send
 That bud and blossom shall with joy distend
 These are the groves where youthful lovers meet
 Their gold-bought beauties whose rich perfumes blend
 With the wild flowers till every dark retreat
 Is loaded with the scent that fills the rocky seat

¹ Vidisa appears to be the modern Bilasa in the province of Malwa

XXIV

Rise with new vigour in thy wings, and look
 Upon the fainting jasmine-buds that pine
 Along the pacht bank of the mountain brook
 To their mute prayer in pitying love incline,
 And water them with those sweet drops of thine,
 Shading awhile the heat-drop-beaded face
 Of the young flower-gul as she hastes to twine
 Her fragrant wreath, too languid to replace
 The drooping lotus-bud she culled her ear to grace

XXV

Here bend a little from thy straight career,
 And though thou speedest on to northern skies,
 Turn and behold a wondrous sight, for near
 Thy path Oujein's¹ imperial domes arise
 Shouldst thou not see her women's glorious eyes,
 That flash to love or kindle to disdain
 In fire that with the lightning's splendour vies

¹ "Ujjayini, or the modern Oujein, is supposed to have been the residence of our poet, and the capital of his celebrated patron, Vikramaditya. It has been a place of great note, from the earliest periods of Hindu tradition down to the present day." H. H. WILSON

Those looks that bind the heart as with a chain—
Thy birth has been for naught thy life is all in vain

XXVI

Now from the level of thine airy road
Glide gently down and amorously sink
Upon Nirvindhya's breast who long has glowed
With love of thee there cling and kiss and drink.
She with the wild swans clamorous on her brink
And their white wings around her for a zone
From thy soft pressure will not coyly shrink
Her trembling wavelets will her rapture own
And testify her love by every gesture shown

XXVII

Sail on refresht dear envoy nor forget
To look with pity upon Sindu pale
With sere leaves shaken o'er the rivulet
From her own trees by the hot summer gale
For her sad shrunken waters welnigh fail
Thinner as the length of hair which women braid
When their dear husbands' absence they bewail

O, pity her, thou gentle Cloud, and aid
The longing of her love by each fond look betrayed.

XXVIII

Near thee a bright imperial city stands,
The blest Avanti or Visala,¹ pride
Of all the earth, famed for its minstrel band
Who with the magic of their verse have vied
To spread the tender story far and wide
Of King Udayana ² a glorious town,
Brought, by the happy Saints unsatisfied
With all that Paradise can offer, down,

¹ Synonyms of Oujein

² "Pradyota was a sovereign of Oujein, who had a daughter named Vasavadatta whom he intended to bestow in marriage upon a King of the name of Sanjaya. In the meantime the princess sees the figure of Vatsaraja (or Udayana) in a dream, and becomes enamoured of him. She contrives to inform him of her love, and he carries her off from her father and his rival." WILSON

To be their best reward their virtues' worthiest crown

XXIX.

The sweet soft zephyr laden with the scent

Which every lotus opening to the air

Of morning from its rifled stores has lent

Plays wooingly around the loosened hair

And fevered cheek of every lady there,

Then as it blows o'er Sipra,² fresh and strong

Bids all the swans upon her banks prepare

To hail the sunrise with their sweetest song

And loves with its own voice the music to prolong

¹ Besides ultimate felicity the Hindus have several minor degrees of happiness among which is the enjoyment of Indra's Swarga, or in fact of a Mahamudra paradise. The duration of the pleasures of this paradise are proportioned to the merits of those admitted to it and "they who have enjoyed this felicitous region of Swarga but whose virtue is exhausted re-visit the habitation of mortals. The case now alluded to seems however to be something different from that as described by Sir William Jones. It appears by the explanation of the Commentators that the exhausted pleasures of Swarga had proved insufficient for the recompense of certain acts of austerity which however were not sufficient to merit final emancipation. The devotees had then refused to seek release for the balance of their reward and for this purpose they returned to Earth being with them the least portion of Swarga, which they continued to live in the discharge of a limited life while account was settled and the liberated spirits were content with the great universal primordial essence. The portion of Swarga that was allotted to Earth was the city Anant whose superior sanctity and divine privileges are here alluded to, and thus explained by the poet. H. Wilson

² The river on which Ojain stands

XXX.

Rest on these flower sweet terraces, and feel,
From open casements where the women braid
Their long, soft locks, delicious odour steal
Look on the polisht marble where the maid
Her small foot, blushing with the dye, has laid ,
There will the peacock with a joyous dance
Spring forth to greet thee from the Mango's shade,
And hail his dear friend with a loving glance
O, rest in this sweet spot, nor lose this blessed chance

XXXI

Hence to the temple of the mighty Lord
Whom Chandi' loves and all the worlds revere ,
There for a moment shalt thou be adored
By those who serve him, when thy hues appear
Like Siva's neck,² as though their God were near.
Then through the garden pleasant gales shall stray
From Gandhavati's fountain, crystal-clear,

¹ A name of the consort of Siva

² "But Siva those destroying streams
Drank up at Brahma's beck
Still in thy throat the dark flood gleams,
God of the Azure Neck"

Bearing the scent of lotus blooms away
Shaken by lovely girls who in the water play

XXXII

Stay till the hour of evening worship comes ,
Stay while the Day God lingers in the sky
Then with low thunderings for the call of drums
Win precious guerdon from the Lord Most High
Each dancing girl with rapture beaming eye
Shall thank thee as thy soft drops cool the ground
While her faint hands the jewelled chowries' ply
And as she moves her languid feet around
Her slender waist the chimes of tinkling silver sound.

XXVIII

When the thick shadows of dark midnight fall
Blinding the maidens in the royal street,
Who fain would fly where love and rapture call
O let thy flashes guide their erring feet
And lead them safely till their loves they meet

¹ A brush made of peacock's feathers, on the tail of the yak. It is used as a fan or to whisk off flies and other insects and this piece of attention is paid by Hindus to the figures of their Gods.

But check thy rain and still thy thunder, lest
 Their terrors force the maidens to retreat
 Then with thy lightning bride, play-wearied, rest
 Where sleeps, high up the tower, the white dove in her nest

XXXIV

Thence, with the rising sun, thy course pursue,
 For loving envoys ever shun delay ,
 But hide him not, when mounting, from the view,
 For the false lover comes with coming day
 To the poor weeping girl, to kiss away
 The water from her eyes So comes the sun
 To cheer the lilies with his amorous ray,
 And kiss their drooping heads, till, one by one,
 They dry the dewy drops that down their petals run

XXXV

Then will thy shadow for a moment sleep
 On the white bosom of Gambhira's stream,¹

¹ "This river, and the Gandhavati in the vicinity of the temple of Siva, which lately occurred, are probably amongst the numerous and (now) nameless brooks with which the province of Malwa abounds" H. H. WILSON

And thy dear image in her crystal deep
 Blend with the fancies of her maiden dream
 Then will she wake to win thee with the gleam
 Of finny darters for the lore of eyes.
 Steel not thy heart against her love nor deem
 Her lilies smile but to allure the prize
 O yield thee to her prayer O yield thee and be wise

XXXXI

Ah yes! I see thee in her loving arms—
 Those feathery branches of the tall bamboo—
 And spread beneath thee are her yielded charms
 And her smooth sides uncovered to the view
 How could such loveliness unheeded woo?
 Who could resist her softly pleading smile
 With heart all cold and dead if e'er he knew
 What joy it is to kiss each breast like isle?
 Who who would turn away nor linger there awhile?

XXXXII

Charged with the odours of the wakened earth
 Whom thy fresh rain has left so pure and gay

The wind of early morning, wild with mirth,
Amid the branches of the grove shall stray
And woo each tendril to responsive play
Then waft thee on to Devagiri's height,
Charming the ear with music on the way,
Where languid elephants shall stay his flight
And drink his balmy breath with wonder and delight

XXXVIII

There gleams the temple, loved and honoured most
By Skanda, Lord of War, who, at the head
Of the bright legions of the heavenly host,
Embattled Gods to arms and conquest led
A wondrous Child, in flames of glory bred
O, crown the slayer of his demon foes !
Turn to a cloud of living flowers, and shed
O'er his young brows the lily and the rose
Bathed in the lucid stream through heavenly realms that flows

XXXIX

Send forth thy thunder, till the glorious voice,
By rocky dell and cavern multiplied,
Bidding the peacock in the shade rejoice,

Calls him to dance along the mountain's side
 Majestic bird whom Skanda loves to ride¹
 Whom Skanda's mother holds so wondrous dear
 That when his moulted plumes in all their pride
 Of starry radiance fall and glitter near
 She lifts them from the ground to grace her royal ear }

XII.

Thy homage rendered to the Warrior God
 Whose infant steps amid the thickets strayed
 Where the reeds wave over the holy sod
 Speed on but let thy course awhile be staid
 Till meet obeisance to that stream be made
 That sprang in olden time from sacred gore
 Of hecatombs by Rantideva paid²

¹ Skanda r I t t k y a the W r God born to destroy the I mo i Tar la
 is represented mounted on a peacock.

² Springing from the blood of countless oxen &c. The sacrifice of the
 horse or of the cow appears to have been common in the early days of
 the Hindu religion. It has been considered the chief sacrifice in the
 type of animal sacrifice formerly practised in India. It is
 after which it was the duty of the sacrificer to perform a
 favourable to the deity. The text of the passage is
 into a river certainly implies that blood was left. The
 original literally and red is the colour of the blood. The
 S b h t h i s k i n e S u r a l i b e g a c e l b r a t l e c o w p r i l l t t l
 eh ring of the ocean and himself granting her star that she
 desired. Daughter of Surabhi is an expression of common occurrence
 to do with the cow. H. H. WILSON

And through the lands her author's glory bore
Enshrined within her waves, to spread for evermore

XII

In fear, each minstrel of the heavenly quire
Shall see thee stoop those watery stores to diam,
And fly thee trembling lest his darling lyre
Be robbed of music by thy threatened rain
Then from his airy watch-tower will he strain
His eager eyes the wondrous sight to view,
As thy large lucid drops, in many a chain,
Hang then long pendants o'er thy borrowed blue,
A string of pearls that show the sapphire gleaming through

XLII

That river past, to Dasapura fly,
And with the shadow of thy coming rouse
The beauties of the city till each eye
Glances its welcome till each maid and spouse,
Beneath the delicate bending of her brows,
Shows her dark pupil flashing wild with glee
In her pure pearly eye-ball, and allows

Short glimpses of a sight as fair to see
As a white jasmine-bud where sits the black wild bee

XVIII

Then speeding on to Brahmavart's land
Hover above the Kurus fatal field¹
Rich with the blood of many a slaughtered band
Where the proud banner waved the war-cry pealed
Where the sword smote upon the helm and shield
When godlike Arjuna² with arrowy hand
Laid low the heads of kings who scorned to yield
As when the arrows of thy sleet assail
The golden lilies heads and strew them down the vale

¹ Kuru Kshetra the Field of the Kurus is the scene of the celebrated battle between them and the Pandavas which forms the subject of the *Mahabharata*. It lies a little to the south-east of Thanjavur and is still a place of note and pilgrimage. It is not far from Pimpri the seat of an celebrated engineering establishment, that between the assembled Princes of Hindustan a little combined strength of the *Maharattas*. The part of the country is little presenting few obstacles to the movement of large armies has in every period of the history of Hindustan been the theatre of contests. H. H. Wilson.

² Arjun was the friend and pupil of Krishna and the third of the Pandava Princes. He has been long a favourite European reader particularly in Sir Charles Wilkins's beautiful translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* and appears in the opening of that poem in a very amiable light. H. H. Wilson.

XIV

Now to Saraswati,¹ whose waters roll
Beside thy path, with due respect draw near,
And let her cleansing wave refresh thy soul
When Balarama,² filled with noble fear
Of kindred slaughter, could no longer cheer
His sorrowing spirit with the sparkling wine,
'Though, murreted in the cup, the eyes most dear
Of his own Revati were wont to shine,
He sought this limpid flood and made the 'spot divine

XIV

On to the place where infant Ganga leaps
From the dark woods that belt the Mountains' King,
Hurling her torrent down the rugged steeps

¹ "The Saraswati, or as it is corruptly called, the Sursooty, falls from the southern portion of the Himalaya mountains, and runs into the great desert, where it is lost in its sands. It flows a little to the north west of Kurnalshetia, and though rather out of the line of the cloud's progress not sufficiently so to prevent the introduction into the poem of a stream so celebrated and so holy." H. H. WILSON

² "We have here the reason why the waters of the Saraswati are objects of religious veneration. Balarama, the elder brother of Krishna, refused to take any part in the warfare between the Kurus and the Pandus, and retired into voluntary seclusion filled with grief at the nature of the contest." H. H. WILSON

Those holy waters & the sages sing
To Sagar's children bliss and heaven could bring
Fresh from her native sky a sportive maid
On Siva's awful head she dared to cling
And with the laughter of her form repaid
His consort's jealous frown as with his hair she played *

XLVI

Drink, for the flood is living crystal, drink,
For the warm gale thy weary wings has dried.
Come, gently bend thee o'er her rocky brink
And tint her waves with azure as they glide
So when dark Jumna's tributary tide
With kissing waves to blend with Ganga flows,
The mightier waters beautifully dyed
With borrowed azure to the sun disclose,
Mixt with their pearly light, the sapphire's darker glows

XLVII

See ' the proud parent of this heavenly child
Woos thee to rest upon his breezy height,
Where herds of musk-deer, as they wander wild,
Enrich with odour every crag Alight,
And, coucht upon the summit robed in white,
Enhance his snowy beauty, as one speck
Of sable shows more gloriously bright
The skin of Siva's Bull,¹ and serves to deck
The whiteness of his flank, the splendour of his neck

¹ The animal on which Siva loves to ride, always represented of a milk-white colour

XLVIII

Hark ! the gales whistling through the woods of pine
Urging to madness all the straining boughs
That twist and chafe and bend and intertwine
The latent flame to wildest fury rouse
Singing the long hair of the mountain cows
Quick rain a thousand torrents on the crest
Of the kind hill and cool his burning brows
With wealth of water thou art richly blest
And fortunes sweetest fruit is aiding friends distress

XLIX

Should Gryphon hosts by mad presumption led
Vext by thy thunder mount the realm of air
To ride thee down beneath their impious tread
Laugh with thy rain to see them baffled there
And with the dashing of thy hail stones scare
Thy scattered foes So let them learn how vain
Is the wild enterprise they fain would dare
That the fond strivings of ambition gain
No guerdon but disgrace no recompense but pain

I

But stoop a little from thy pride of place
With circling motion reverently slow
Around the rock where pilgrims still may trace
The foot of Mahadeva,¹ softly go
There saintly breaths with rapt devotion glow,
There holy hands the flames of worship feed,
There His good servants, saved from sin and woe,
From the sore weight of earthly life are freed,
Join His own heavenly band and gain a priceless meed

II

Hast thou no voice to laud Him? Be not dumb,
But let thy thunder round the caverned hill
Proclaim His glory like a mightier drum
The gales with melody each reed shall fill
The maidens of the sky, whose bosoms thrill
With holy rapture, shall rejoice and sing,
And all shall swell the glorious concert till
Valley and mountain, earth and air shall ring
Hailing with jubilant hymns the great victorious King

¹ The 'Great God,' SIVA

LII

Skirting the mansion of eternal snows

Compress thy form and winding round explore

Where Krauncha's parted rocks a pass disclose

Traversed by swans—those rocks that burst before

The might of Rama¹ and the axe he bore

Then show like Vishnu's darksome foot whose tread

Measured the sky and earth's broad bosom o'er

When Bali with his proud heart filled with dread

Confessed the Saviour God and bowed his impious head²

¹ The Krauncha pass is said to have been made by Parasurama or Rama with the ax and incarnation of Vishnu.

² The story of Bali and the Vaman or dwarf Avatar was first told by Sannarat, and has since been frequently repeated. As the former is good specimen of the style in which Hindu legends were narrated by European travellers in the last century it may be here inserted. The fifth incarnation was in a Bramin dwarf and the name of Vaman it was wrought to restrain the pride of the giant Bely. The latter, after having conquered the god, expelled them from Sogon. He was generous true to his word, compassionate and charitable. Vichnou under the form of a very little Bramin presented himself before him while he was sacrificing and asked him for three paces of land to build a hut. Bely ridiculed the apparent imbecility of the dwarf in telling him that he ought not to limit his demand to a beguiling trifling—that his generosity would be to award a challenge donation of land. Vaman answered that being of small stature what he asked was more than sufficient. The prince immediately granted his request and to ratify his donation poured water into his right hand which was no sooner done than the dwarf grew so prodigiously that his body filled the universe. He measured the earth with three paces and the heaven with anither and then summoned Bely to give him his reward for the third. The prince then recognised Vichnou addressed him and presented his head to him but the god, satisfied with his submission sent him to govern the Pandion and permitted him to return every year to the earth the day of the full moon in the month of November. H. H. WIL.

III

Now soaring upward, on Kailas's crest,
That lends its mirror to each heavenly maid,
Linger a little as an honoured guest,
And let thine airy pilgrimage be staid
Once that high mountain shook and was afraid,
Loosened by Ravan, Lord of Lanka's isle,
Now cleaving heaven, to all the lands displayed,
The white peaks of the hly-radiant pile
Flash on the world below, like Siva's glorious smile.

I.V

I see the summits of the hill, that shine
Like new-cut ivory so purely white,
Gleam with fresh lustre as that form of thine
Descends upon them, and thy tint of night
Tips with a sable pall the snowy height
So Balarama's limbs of silvery hue
Show fairer in their purple livery dight,
So from his chest and arms exposed to view
The heightened sheen beneath sets off the raiment too ¹

¹ He is represented of a white colour clothed in a dark blue vest

LV

High fate is thine should sportive Gauri¹ list
In those sweet moments ere the close of day—
Untied the serpent bracelet from the wrist—
Hand lockt in hand with Siva there to stray
Come and with easy steps their upward way
Thy stores of rain within thy breast confine,
And let the heavenly pair delighted lay
The blessing of their feet on stairs that shine
With gold caught from the sun ruby and almandine

LVI

Then will celestial maids with laugh and shout
Open their lovely arms thy form to seize
And o'er their tresses force thy waters out
Which the light touch of hundred diamond² frees
But should too long restraint thy soul displease
Send forth the thunder of thy voice and they

¹ One of the names of Siva's consort.

² The diamond and thunderbolt according to Hindu ideas, are of one substance and are called by the same name. As the fall of the thunderbolt is usually followed by rain and may thus be considered as its cause the propinquity and the mutual friction of the same substance upon the wrists of our young ladies is, in like manner supposed to occasion the dispersion of the fluid treasures of the Cloud. H. H. WILSON

Fleeter through terror than the western breeze,
Will fly thee, e'en in their delicious play,
And seek their distant home in wonder and dismay.

LVII.

Near is the goal, yet, ere thy course be run,
One sweet fresh draught of limpid water take
Where golden lilies opening to the sun
Stud the broad bosom of the Manas lake
Deign for awhile a friendly shade to make
For Indra's elephant, and, floating through,
With the soft fanning of thy pinions shake
The Heavenly Tree, and all her blooms renew
With the young morning's breath embalmed with silver dew.

LVIII

There, by the mountain claspt in loving arms,
Alaka, City of the Blessed, lies
Her bright feet bathed by Ganga's flood, she charms
With marvellous beauty e'en immortal eyes

¹ A celebrated lake in the centre of the Himalayas "We here take leave of the geographical part of the poem, which is highly creditable to Kalidasa's accuracy, and now come to the region of unmixed fable, the residence of Kuvra and his demigods" H H WILSON.

Thou too free rover shalt her beauty prize
And often wander to mine own dear town
Nor shall sweet Alaka thy love despise
But proudly wear upon her domes a crown
Of the pure drops of pearl thou pourest softly down

LIX

And she has charms which naught but thou excels
High as thyself her airy turrets soar
And from her gilded palaces there swells
The voice of drums loud as thy thunder & roar
Thy pearls are mockt by many a jewelled floor
Come with the glories of thy bow compare
The varied tints on arch and corridor
And for thy lightning in the midnight air
Look in her madens eye and own a rival there

LX

Unmatcht is she for lovely girls who learn
To choose the flowers that suit them best and bring
The varied treasures of each month in turn
To aid those charms which need no heightening

The Amaranth, bight glory of the spring ,
The Lotus, gathered from the summer flood ,
Acacias, taugth around their brows to cling ,
The Jasmine's fragrant white, their locks to stud ;
And, bursting at thy rain, the young Kadamba-bud

LXI

O beauties, worthy of that beauteous place,
That sweetest city which I know so well,
Where mine own brethren of ethereal race,
Blest with the love of those fair angels, dwell
In homes too beautiful for tongue to tell !
Those homes by night a starry radiance fills,
Shot from the jewelled floors where breathes the smell
Of roses, and while melting music thrills,
They quaff the precious wine the Heavenly Tree distils

LXII

The tell-tale sunbeam of the morning, thrown
Upon the path each roving beauty chose,
Falls on some faded flower, some loosened zone,
A withered lotus or a dying rose,

Or bracelet which her haste forgot to close
Here a dropt diadem of orient pearl
The fond impatience of its mistress shows
And here the jasmine bud that deckt the curl
Lying upon the grass betrays the amorous girl

LXIII

There the coy nymph too eagerly embraced
By some young lover whom the night makes bold
Slips from the arm that stealing round her waist
Has forced her shrinking from its amorous hold
Her ruffled robe over her breast to fold
Then armed with fragrant powder she will turn
Where on high pedestals of gems and gold
Bright torches with too clear a radiance burn
To hide the triumph of the love she will not spurn

LXIV

There driven by the ever moving gale
The clouds thy brethren in an endless train
Around each palace of the city sail
Now easy access to the halls they gain

And mar the painter's art with dewy stain.
But when the traces of their steps they see
They fear within those chambers to remain,
In wreathing clouds of incense seek to flee,
Glide through the lattice bars and once more wander free

LXV

Dark is the sky behind thee, but, whene'er
The light wind moves thy sombre veil away,
Again the moon, most excellently fair,
With naught the glory of the light to stay,
Shines on each chamber with a loving ray,
Where beauty, waking from her rapturous dream,
Sees with delight the silver radiance play
On hanging crystals¹ where thy dewdrops gleam,
And feels through all her flame returning vigour stream

LXVI

Though Kama, tyrant of the soul, in awe
Of Siva, foe to Love, Kuvera's friend,

¹ "The moon gem, which is supposed to absorb the rays of the moon, and to emit them again in the form of pure and cool moisture" H H WILSON

Forbears in Alaka his bow to draw¹
 Still mightier arms her merry maidens lend
 What bow so lovely as the brows they bend?
 What archer's skill so perfect as the art
 Of those bewitching eyes that love to send
 The arrows of their glances forth and dart
 Those shafts that never fail but pierce the lover's heart?

LXVII

Now close beneath thee thou wilt see my home
 Where flashing forth the jewelled archway's glow
 North of my lord Kuvera's royal dome
 With hues of glory mocks the heavenly bow
 There my love's flowers in dazzling beauty blow
 There in the midst the tall Mandara see
 Bending the burden of her branches low
 To touch her lady's hand no child might be

¹ This all due to the fate which befell the Hindu Cupid upon his assaulting Sivah when at the desire of the gods he inflamed with the love of Priti Siva's wrath reduced the little deity to ashes by a flame from the eye in his forehead and although he was subsequently restored to immortality he is here supposed to remain in dread of his former enemy. H. H. WILSON

² The Coastal or Erythraea India

Nurtured with tenderer care than that her darling tree.¹

LXVIII

There girt with emerald steps a bright lake gleams,
Where the gold lotus fires the lily's white .
The swans that sail upon its silver streams
Shall hail thy coming with renewed delight,
And love the cool waves better for the sight
That bids them linger near the pleasant shore,
Without a wish to seek in distant flight
The mountain lake that seemed so dear before,
That lovely mountain lake now scarce remembered more

LXIX.

Deckt with smooth sapphires, rising from the fount,
A spot beloved by my young bride of old,
Sacred to rest and pleasure, stands a mount,
Which a thick plantain-grove belts round with gold.
E'en now, dark Cloud, as these sad eyes behold
Thy sombre mass girt by thy lightning's sheen,

¹ " If the flowers had been her own children, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly "

The Sensitive Plant.

They see the spot of which my tongue has told
Back to my soul comes fresh that glorious scene
The plantains circling gold the hillocks velvet green

LXX.

Sweet clustering trailers and each fairest flower
That charms the sense or captivates the eye
Give grace and odour to my lady's bower
The bright Asoca and the Kesar vie
For her caresses as my love walks by
That asks the pressure of her foot¹ and this
Wild for the joy for which I vainly sigh
With me aspiring seeks a higher bliss
To touch those perfect lips with a long loving kiss

LXXI

See on a pedestal of crystal placed
A golden column very tall and fair
With richest gems like budding cane shoots graced
Towers o'er the waving trees and gleaming there

¹ I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet.

The blue-necked peacock drinks the evening air,
And when my darling wanders forth alone,
He tries each art to drive away her care,
Dispreads his plumes and dances to the tone
Of the melodious chime made by her tinkling zone

LXXII

Led by these tokens thou wilt surely know
The once bright dwelling of my love and me,
When our glad lives were strangers yet to woe
But altered now that happy spot may be,
Since the stern vengeance of my lord's decree
Has torn me far from all I loved away
The lotus glories in the sun, but he
Leaves his sad darling at the close of day
To mourn with folded blooms the light that made her gay

LXXIII

Gently descending, on that hillock fall,
Not in full glory lest that form of thine
In all its splendour, all its might, appal
My timid lady Let thy lightning shine

Like sportive fire-flies in a flashing line
And to thy friendly eyes my darling show
She stands within her chamber most divine
Of all the works of God with rosy glow
Of lips with teeth of pearl eyes of the startled roe

LXXIV

O see her silent there my second life
Like a poor love bird mourning for her mate
My lonely weeping miserable wife
Weeping at early morn at evening late
With bitter tears her banisht husband's fate
Where hast thou seen a nymph so soft of mould
So tender loving and disconsolate?
Sister the sad lady's spirit dwelt of old
In some frail lotus flower that shrank from rain and cold

LXXV

See on her hand her faded cheek reclines
Long hanging tresses veil her drooping head
Bedimmed with tears her eye no longer shines
And the bright colour of her lip is fled

For dewy sighs have washed away the red
Like the cold moon is she, sad, feeble, pale,
When o'er its face thy pall, dark Cloud, is spread,
And all the silver beams, imprisoned, fail
To penetrate the shroud, to pierce the sombre veil

LXXVI

Now as the sight of thee renews her woe,
She turns to sacrifice from her wild eyes,
That picture forth my form, new torrents flow,
To see my mournful wasted image rise
Then to her favourite bird she sadly cries
'Dost thou remember, pet, when thou wast free?
And is the mate, with whom, from summer skies
Down sailing, in the well-known roosting tree
'Twas once thy lot to rest, still dearly loved by thee?'

LXXVII

Or she will touch her lute with careless grace,
And with her low soft voice prepare to sing
Some little ballad of mine ancient race
But soon the tears that flow from memory's spring

Nor the sweet music of the silver string
Her thoughts will wander from the cherished lay
The notes of triumph will no longer ring
And her melodious voice will die away
In some wild wailing strain meet for the evil day

LXXVIII

Then bravely struggling with her dark despair
She turns away and fondly numbers o'er
The faded garlands which her pious care
Twines every month that comes above the door
Counts to the happy day that will restore
Her husband, and the thought so passing sweet
Brings light and rapture to her eye once more
Her bosom swells her pulse wildly beat
And fancy hears the step of my returning feet

LXXIX.

These cares by day assuage the mourner's grief
But Ah! the night brings only woe and pain,
Be this the season for my love's relief
Fill then dear Cloud thy soothing voice restrain

And give thine aid when other help is vain
When all is dark and still float softly near
The lattice of her chamber, and remain
To breathe thy message in her sleepless ear,
And in the weary night my widowed darling cheer

LXXX

Then on her lonely couch, thin, anguish-worn,
Watching and weeping still she sadly lies,
Pale as the waning moon that flies the morn
When first the sunbeams fire the eastern skies
She slowly counts 'mid tears and deep-drawn sighs
The long long weary hours that used to be
Like moments, praying that the sun may rise
To chase the lingering night that wont to flee
Like a quick flash of joy when it was past with me

LXXXI

But should my love her weary eyelids close,
Lulled by sweet thoughts and many a hopeful sign,
Let not thy thunder break her soft repose,
Nor sudden bid her wreathing arms untwine

Lest in her dreams they should be clasping mine
Still let such dreams her aching bosom bless
Then when the sunbeams on her lattice shine
With thy deep sounding words the dame address
And thus my longing love and tender hope express

LXXXII

O lonely mourner from thy lord I speed
And to his distant home fond greetings bear
Tis mine the exile's weary steps to lead
In safety back to soothe his bride's despair
Tis mine with thunder rolling through the air
To wake the sigh for all he left behind
The well loved cot and wife still weeping there
And urge his trembling fingers to unbind
The mourner's braid of hair for his long absence twined

LXXXIII

Thy faithful lord on Rama's wood-crowned hill
Mourns the sad lot that severs him from thee
And in fond fancy he is with thee still
Though far away by hostile fate's decree

Wasted with woe, he seems thy form to see
Worn, like his own, with tears that ever roll
From orbs that with his weeping eyes agree .
He feels the longing of thy kindred soul,
And counts thy sighs in those his breast can ne'er control

TXXXIV

He bids me now his loving message speak,
For far is he from all he holds most dear ,
But O, what joy, might he but touch thy cheek
And softly whisper thus into thine ear
' O peerless creature, in my prison here
Signs of thy beauty meet me every hour .
I see the *graces* of thy form appear
Faintly reflected in each fairest flower
That twines her tender shoots around my lonely bower

TXXXV.

When from my path the startled roedeer run,
Their eyes, sweet love, thy gentle glance recall
The peacock's glories, gleaming in the sun,
Show like thy tresses glittering as they fall

I see thine arching eyebrow in the small
Ripple upon the brook the moon Ah me !
Brings back thy pure pale cheek in these in all
The fairest sights that nature boasts I see
Faint emblems of the charms that meet in none but thee

LXXXVI

Oft my love-guided hand essays to paint
Thy portrait on the rock with mineral dyes ,
And soon as fancy fondly sees a faint
Resemblance of thy well loved face arise
I fall upon the ground with eager cries
Of transport but e'en here an envious veil
Fate interposes and the vision flies
Gone is the form I wildly thought to hail
And dim with blinding tears my loving glances fail

LXXXVII

The spirits of the grove believe me weep
As I lie tossing on my lonely bed
Their pearly tears steal gently down and steep
The green leaves that o'er canopy my head

As, in a dream of thee, they watch me spread
My arms, enlacing in their eager strain
Naught but the yielding air of night instead
Of that delicious form they would detain .
Then see me start and sigh and wake to woe again

LXXXVIII

A welcome herald from my darling comes
The breeze that from the snowy mountain springs,
Loaded with fragrance from the oozing gums
Of pine-buds rilled by its balmy wings
To me it whispers such delicious things,
For it may be its breath has fondly played
Over my lady's bosom, whence it brings
Diviner fragrance, tenderly has laid
A kiss upon her lips, and fanned her in the shade

LXXXIX

But yield not, love, to dark despair, nor think
That changeless, never ending, is our doom,
Or in the strife thy gentle soul will sink
Some friendly stars the moonless night illumine,

Some flowers of hope amid the desert bloom
 Life has no perfect good no endless ill
 No constant brightness no perpetual gloom
 But circling as a wheel and never still
 Now down and now above all must their fate fulfil

XC

Four months remain and when that age is fled
 Then ends my banishment and all our pain
 When Vishnu rises from his serpent bed¹
 Where lapt in sleep the Bow armed God has lain
 Thy lover speeds to home and thee again
 The moon of autumn with serener glow
 His silver influence on our nights shall rain
 And our rapt souls with joy shall overflow
 More exquisitely sweet for all remembered woe

¹ The serpent couch is the great snake Ananta upon which Vishnu or as he is here called the Hildr of the bow Sarnga (the horn bow) reclines during four months from the 11th of Asharha to the 11th of Kartik or as it has occurred in 1813 from the 23d of June to the 26th of October. The sleep of Vishnu during the four months of the periodical rains in Hindustan seems to bear an emblematical relation to that season. It has been compared to the Egyptian hieroglyphical account of the sleep of Ho us typical of the annual verflow of the Nil by the late Mr Paterson in his interesting Essay on the Origin of the Hindu Religion Asiatic Researches vol. viii H. H. WILSON

XCI

Once more I see thee, but no more alone,
Thy senses steeped in dews of slumber, lie,
With thy fond arms around thy husband thrown
Thou startest weeping, and I ask thee why
Thy soul is troubled when thy lord is nigh
‘Traitor,’ thou sayest, as a smile and tear
Plays on thy lip and glistens in thine eye,
‘Faithless I saw thee in my dream appear,
Whispering tales of love into another’s ear’

XCII

‘But, dark-eyed beauty, rest thou ever sure
That, with a constancy that naught shall bend,
Through woe and absence shall my faith endure
To slanderous tales forbear thine ear to lend
Store in thy heart the message which I send,
And soothe thee with the trust that love like mine
Will live unchanging on till time shall end,
Burn with a flame that ne’er shall know decline,
But, fed with hope, each day shall yet more brightly shine.’

XCH

Wilt thou dear Cloud through regions far away
This loving message to my darling bear ?
Silent art thou yet not in vain I pray
For when the Rain birds in the sultry air
Crave the cool shower of thee thou dost not care
To speak in answer but sweet drops descend
And their faint strength and flagging wings repair
So comes the aid the good delight to lend
Deciding the granted wish best answer to a friend

XCV

Thus faithful herald having cheered her heart
Who mourns in joyless solitude her fate
From the high forehead of that hill depart
Where the celestial Bull who bears the weight
Of Siva rends the rock with joy elate
Return to me and let my spirit know
Some comfort hearing of my darling's state
Ere my soul sink beneath its weight of woe
Like a frail jasmine bud scorcht by the summer's glow

XCV

So shall my thanks repay thy gentle deed,
And evermore my blessings follow thee
So by the breezes wafted, shalt thou speed
To pleasant regions where thou fain wouldst be,
There rest delighted or there wander free ,
May the sweet rain ne'er fail thee , and thy bride,
The splendid lightning, mayst thou ever see
Close to thyself in dazzling beauty ride,
Flashing upon thy breast or sporting at thy side '

XCVI

The mourner ceased , the airy envoy heard ,
And the fond speech, by love made eloquent,
Kuvera's breast with soft compassion stirred
His ear in mercy to the tale he bent
That led his yielding spirit to relent,
And made him, ere the term was nigh, restore
The exile languishing in banishment,
And freely bade him, all his trials o'er,
Live with his love again with joy for evermore

THE SUPPLIANT DOVE

Chased by a hawk there came a dove
 With worn and weary wing
 And took her stand upon the hand
 Of Kasi's noble king
 The monarch smoothed her ruffled plumes
 And laid her on his breast
 And cried No fear shall vex thee here
 Rest pretty egg born nest!
 Fair Kasi's realm is rich and wide
 With golden harvests gay
 But all that's mine will I resign
 Ere I my guest betray

But, panting for his half-won spoil,
The hawk was close behind,
And with wild eye and eager cry
Came swooping down the wind
'This bird,' he cried, 'my destined prize,
'Tis not for thee to shield
'Tis mine by right and toilsome flight
O'er hill and dale and field
Hunger and thirst oppress me sore,
And I am faint with toil
Thou shouldst not stay a bird of prey
Who claims his rightful spoil
They say thou art a glorious king,
And justice is thy care
Then justly reign in thy domain,
Nor rob the birds of air'
Then cried the king 'A cow' or deer
For thee shall straightway bleed,
Or let a ram or tender lamb
Be slain, for thee to feed

¹ I have retained the cow at the risk of hurting the feelings of some sensitive Hindus. This apologue was composed before the cow was sacrosanct

Mine oath forbids me to betray
 My little twice born guest
See how she clings with trembling wings
 To her protector's breast
No flesh of lambs the hawk replied
 No blood of deer for me
The falcon loves to feed on doves
 And such is Heaven's decree
But if affection for the dove
 Thy pitying heart has stired
Let thine own flesh my maw refresh
 Weighed down against the bird
He carved the flesh from off his side
 And threw it in the scale
While women's cries smote on the skies
 With loud lament and wail
He hatched the flesh from side and arm
 From chest and back and thigh
But still above the little dove
 The monarch's scale stood high
He heaped the scale with piles of flesh
 With sinews, blood and skin

And when alone was left him bone
He threw himself therein
Then thundered voices through the air ,
The sky grew black as night ,
And fever took the earth that shook
To see that wondrous sight
The blessed Gods, from every sphere,
By India led, came nigh ,
While drum and flute and shell and lute
Made music in the sky
They rained immortal chaplets down,
Which hands celestial twine,
And softly shed upon his head
Pure Amrit, drink divine
Then God and Seraph, Bard and Nymph
Their heavenly voices raised,
And a glad throng with dance and song
The glorious monarch praised
They set him on a golden car
That blazed with many a gem ,
Then swiftly through the air they flew,
And bore him home with them

THE DESCENT OF GANGA.

He stood upon the lofty crest
 That crowns the Lord of Snow,
 And bade the river of the Blest
 Descend on earth below
 Himalaya's child, adored of all,
 The haughty mandate heard
 And her proud bosom at the call
 With furious wrath was stirred
 Down from her channel in the skies
 With awful might she sped,
 In a giant's rush, in a giant's size,
 On Siva's holy head

He call me in her wrath she cried
And all my flood shall sweep
And whirl him in its whelming tide
To hell's profoundest deep
He held the river on his head
And kept her wandering where
Dense as Himalaya's woods were spread
The tangles of his hair
No way to earth she found ashamed
Though long and sore she strove
Condemned until her pride were tamed
Amid his locks to rove
At length when many a year had past
He bade her wanderings end
Bade the delighted flood at last
Upon the earth descend
With deafening roar upon the rock
Down sped the heavenly tide
And earth who trembled at the shock
With hollow voice replied
On countless glittering scales the beam
Of rosy morning flashed

Where fish and dolphins in the stream,
 Fallen and falling, dashed
Then Bards who chant celestial lays,
 And Nymphs of heavenly birth,
Flocked round upon the flood to gaze
 That streamed from sky to earth
The Gods themselves from every sphere,
 Incomparably bright,
Borne in their golden cars drew near
 To see the wondrous sight
The cloudless sky was all aflame
 With the light of a hundred suns,
Where'er the shining chariots came
 That bore those holy ones
So flashed the air with crested snakes
 And fish of every hue,
As when the lightning's glory breaks
 Through fields of summer blue
And white foam-clouds and silver spray
 Were wildly tossed on high,
Like swans that urge their homeward way
 Across the autumn sky

Now flowed the river calm and clear

With current deep and strong

Now slowly broadened to a mere

Or scarcely moved along

Now o'er a length of sandy plain

Her tranquil course she held

Now rose her waves and sank again

By reflux waves repelled

TARA'S LAMENT.

Tara, widowed of her spouse,
Kissed him on the cheek and brows ,
O'er her fallen hero bent,
Called him with this wild lament
' Still, my lord, without reply ?
Is the earth more loved than I,
That thou choosest to recline
On her breast, forsaking mine ?
Lord and keeper, good and brave,
Sage to guide and strong to save,
See, thy chiefs, a mournful ring,
Wait around their silent king

Wilt thou still be stern and mute?
Must they miss thy kind salute?
Dearest when the morning's red
Calls thee from thy royal bed
Is thy wont to welcome each
With a gift or pleasant speech
Must thy lords unheeded stay?
Will thou not arise to day?
Wilt thou not awake from sleep
While thy friends round thee weep?
Look thy child before thee stands
Lifts to thee his little hands
Wilt thou silent yet despise
That appeal of wistful eyes?

Ah! my love is dead is dead
Look ye how his wounds have bled
How the crimson torrents make
Round his limbs a rising lake
Death my child has hurried hence
Him who was our sure defence
Come and look on him who thus

Slain in fight has gone from us
Kiss thy sne and say farewell ' '

Came the little child and fell
On his knees and fondly pressed
Those cold feet with arm and breast .
' Here is Angada,' he cried ,
' Father, speak ' but none replied

Weeping, as her child she viewed,
Tara thus her plaint renewed
' Hast thou not a word not one
Father, for thy darling son ?
Canst thou still and silent lie,
Hear him call, and not reply ?
Husband, by thy bloody bed
Thus I sit and mourn thee dead ,
Like some mother of the herd,
By the lion undeterred,
Mourning in the grassy dell
Where her lord and leader fell '

TRUE GLORY

To whom is glory justly due ?
 To those who pride and hate subdue
 Who mid the joys that lure the sense
 Lead lives of holy abstinence
 Who when reviled their tongues restrain
 And injured injure not again
 Who ask of none but freely give
 Most liberal to all that live
 Who toil unresting through the day
 Their parents joy and hope and stay
 Who welcome to their homes the guest
 And banish envy from their breast
 With reverent study love to pore
 On precepts of our sacred lore
 Who work not speak not think not sin
 In body pure and pure within
 Whom avarice can ne'er mislead

To guilty thought or sinful deed ,
Whose fancy never seeks to roam
From the dear wives who cheer their home ,
Whose hero souls cast fear away
When battling in a rightful fray ,
Who speak the truth with dying breath
Undaunted by approaching death,
Their lives illumed with beacon light
To guide their brothers' steps aright
Who loving all, to all endeared,
Fearless of all by none are feared ,
To whom the world with all therein,
Dear as themselves, is more than kin ,
Who yield to others, wisely meek,
The honours which they scorn to seek ,
Who toil that rage and hate may cease
And lure embittered foes to peace ,
Who serve their God, the laws obey,
And earnest, faithful, work and pray ,
To these, the bounteous, pure, and true,
Is highest glory justly due

Mahabharat.

INGRATITUDE

O Monarch hear with mind and ear
 The words that Brahma spake
 The thankless man lives under ban
 Who will his life may take
 Man for all sin may pardon win
 How deep soe'er the guilt
 Yea for the stain of Brahman slain
 Whose blood must ne'er be spilt
 Slave to the bowl that kills the soul
 He turns and gains relief
 The liar yet may pardon get
 The perjured and the thief

But never can the thankless man
Be pardoned for his crime
Disgrace and shame shall hunt his name
Through life and endless time
When, reft of friends, his days he ends
In profitless remorse,
E'en beasts of prey shall turn away
And scorn his loathed corpse '

FEED THE POOR

If thou would win the dear reward
Which only virtue earns
Waste not thy wealth upon the lord
Who gift for gift returns
Not with the rich thy treasures share
Give aid to those who need
And with the gold thy wants can spare
The poor and hungry feed
Be sure that those who would receive
Deserve and crave thy care
And ponder ere thy hands relieve
The how and when and where

THE WISE SCHOLAR.

I hold that scholar truly wise
 Who schools his heart and lips and eye^s
 Who can as worthless clay behold
 The treasures of another's gold .
 Who looks upon his neighbour's wife
 As upon her who gave him life
 Who feels as for himself for all
 That live on earth, both great and sma^{ll}

THE END

BY THE SAME

SPECIMENS OF OLD INDIAN POETRY Translated from the original Sanskrit into English verse

THE BIRTH OF THE WAR GOD A poem by Kálidasa (Kumára-Sambhava) Translated into English verse

IDYLLS FROM THE SANSKRIT

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